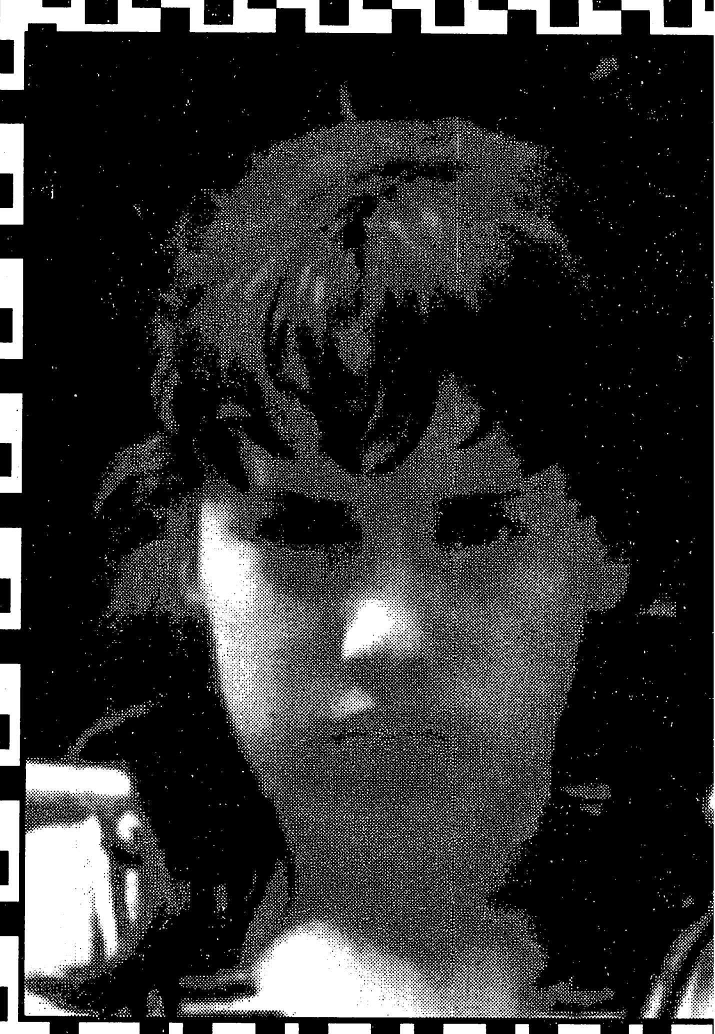

ANSWER! Me!
THE FIRST THREE
ANSWER! ME!
GUNS!

ANSWER Me!

THE FIRST THREE

AK PRESS
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Photos above: "Jim at Four" & "Debbie at Eleven," taken by our parents, may they burn in hell.

SOCIETY AND ME

by debbie goad

Sure, she's **ANSWER Me!**'s co-editor, but few are willing to acknowledge her days as Black Sabbath's lead singer.

On one end of the planet sits society. On the other end sits me. It has always been this way.

When I wake up in the morning, there's a dead world waiting for me. So I sleep until the crust seals my eyes shut. When the angry sunlight finally forces them open again, the trouble begins.

"Don't you like *anything?*" the idiots ask me. They must not know me very well.

I like litters of newborn puppies and garbage cans filled with aborted fetuses. I like the sound of children in pain. I like people who are so misshapen by birth defects, they don't even appear human anymore. I like loners who stand in corners at parties. I like family gatherings which devolve into fistfights. I like flesh-eating bacteria and the hantavirus. I like it when old enemies slowly suffer. I like rain and cold and dark skies and being alone. I like listening to the clanging symphony of human frustration. I like to watch the world slowly implode, because it confirms my hunches from long, long ago. You may say that I'm merely being contrary, but I think YOU'RE the disagreeable one.

My life has postponed its promise of death. So I linger around, forcing YOU to suffer. I am here to rain on your parade. I am the dynamite which blasts through your bullshit. I am the pubic hair at the bottom of your soup bowl. I want you to cry at inappropriate moments and laugh when no one else does. I want you to feel suicidal around holidays. I want you to slice your skin open and cover the wounds when guests visit. I want you to lose everything except the knowledge that you have no personality.

What upsets me is that there are no guarantees in life. Good things happen, but they are taken away too quickly. The bad always outweighs the good.

Most of the people I liked are dead. Endless car crashes. Painful diseases. A boyfriend who was shot to death in Flatbush. Nothing lasts. My body will be destroyed by age like a butterscotch sucking candy being slowly dissolved. Life is punishment.

My death wish was evident in my birth. There I was, popping feet-first from my mother's cunt, the umbilical cord tied nooselike around my neck. My face was blue until they revived me. A "blue baby." A morose infant. An unloved child, tossed into the bushes by the other kids. Smacked in the face with a baseball bat at seven years old. Smothered with a blanket and beaten with broomsticks by my summer-camp roommates. Bruises. Pain is my friend.

Growing up, I was a "behavioral problem." My parents gave up on me. So did everyone else. I was never one of the girls. The other Brownies hated me. I celebrated birthdays alone. Cried through the winter, spring, summer, and fall. Went through a box of tissues every night. My tears dried and no one cared. Society was not to be trusted.

I grew from a crying child into a bitter adult. I've always felt hopeless and full of hatred. NEVER HAPPY. NEVER HAPPY. NEVER HAPPY. Therein lies my charm. Never popular. Never liked. When people asked me what I wanted to be, the most obvious answer was, "nothing."

My teen years were a mixture of parental sheltering and chemical excess. I'd sit alone in my bedroom, screaming off-key to Doors and Stooges songs. Rock 'n' roll depression. Bad weed. Bad acid. Bad hang-overs. Bad relationships. Bad attitude.



The Manson girl who evaded prosecution: Debbie Rosalie, Brooklyn, 1970.



You can take the girl out of Brooklyn...

I'm autistic, not artistic. Society murders me. The gang always gangs up on me. When I'm surrounded by people, I drown. Ask anyone who's ever tried to talk to me. *They'll* tell you how bouncy and sociable I am. Not stuck-up, just stiff. Cold. Distant. Lost in an entirely different constellation.

In 1986, Jimmy and I met at a Johnny Thunders concert in New York. I stopped hearing the music. Instant attraction. Two lonely people. Antisocial, psychotic misanthropes who would join forces against the world. We sat together on some steps, ignoring the concert. Ignoring everyone else. The rest of the world died that night.

"They should just drop a bomb and get it over with," I said to him. He agreed. When I looked in Jimmy's eyes, I saw the same hatred I had seen in the mirror my whole life. It was love. We bonded through doom.

As soon as we met each other, we tuned out the rest of the crowd. Everyone else was an intruder. We'd go on dates to cemeteries, junkyards, and pentecostal churches. We fucked at the world's largest trash dump, located in Staten Island. We hung my used tampons and his used rubbers on our Christmas tree. We smoked crack (once) and then went to see a Catskills comedy revue. Elvis tribute nights and Jewish singles' dances. Ferris wheels and pro wrestling matches. On our first vacation together, we went to peep booths in Cleveland and toured Detroit's slums. Our own songs and catch phrases. Our own language. I told him I wanted to die. He told me he wanted to die. The only thing which stopped us was the fact that we'd miss each other too much.

Things fell into place like an avalanche. When it's just me and Jimmy, it's a party. Add another person, it's a funeral. Me and Jimmy. That's it. Driving through the desert at night. Or hiding up in the mountains. Anywhere away from you.



Debbie's "creative" phase.

I value very few things in this cocksucking life, but honesty is one of them. We've never told a lie in *ANSWER Me!* That's why the poseurs and scene jockeys hate us so much—their lives are a scummy snot-string of falsehoods. The liars are the enemies. They'll heave a sigh of relief when I die, because I force them to face themselves, which they hate to do.

I'm negative because there's so much that's worthy of negation. I don't add to the hatred in society, I merely clarify it all. Negativity has been the most positive force in my life. Astronomers know that this planet won't last. I've known it all along. It's high time that everyone else learned.

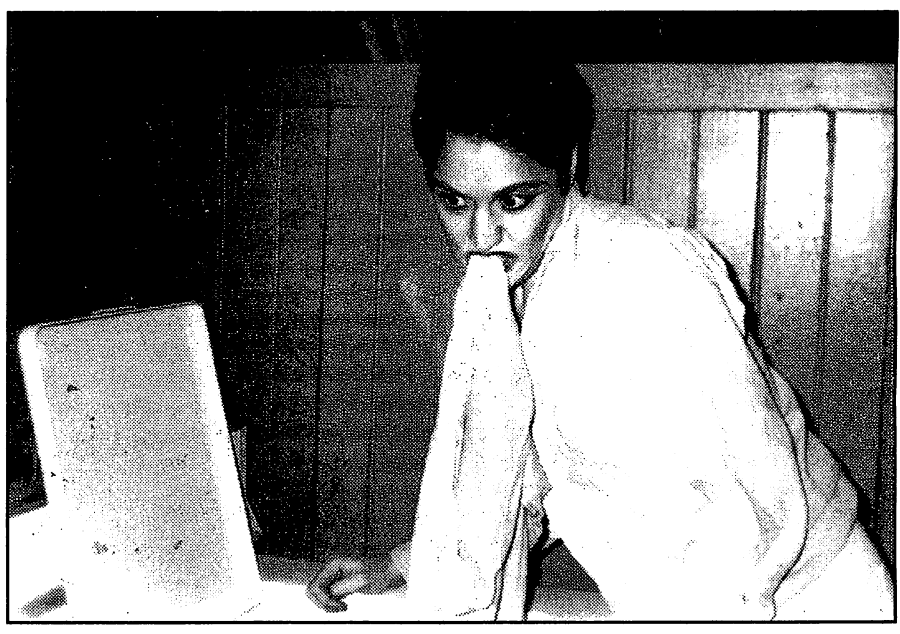
I take great courage in the fact that there's no hope for the world. I consider *ANSWER Me!* a public service. In years to come, perhaps people will acknowledge how right we were in seeing the crappiness in everything. But I doubt it. There will always be more of THEM than us. And there will only be a handful of you who will ever truly get it.



NEVER HAPPY. NEVER HAPPY. NEVER HAPPY.

An invisible sheet of placenta still shields me from society. My eyes filter out the happiness and brightness that *you* see. I don't see it. I was born with death in my eyes. I'm blind to the lighter side. But you'll never be able to see the darkness quite as well as I can.

I have a filthy mouth and a clean conscience. A barren womb and a fertile imagination. A shitty attitude and a heart of gold. Keep your distance. If I want another friend, I'll get another cat. You've all disappointed me. You've let me down more than your soggy brains can comprehend. You failed my test. Where the fuck were you when I needed you? ■



Debbie hates doing laundry almost as much as she hates babies, women, men, the family, the homeless, rock musicians, and being a Jew.

DON'T YOU FUCKING DARE ~~PLEASE DON'T~~ LET ME BE MISUNDERSTOOD!

BY JIM GOAD



His interest in firearms started very early in life.

I dropped off our fourth issue today at one of our L.A. distributors. Well, I *tried* to drop it off.

I usually had no problem delivering *ANSWER Me!* to this cramped, humid-with-sweat, gay-porn-video-vending distributorship, but our normal sales guy was no longer working there. I sort of missed the red-bearded, cologne-sprinkled, show-tune-humming gentleman. We gave him magazines. He gave us money.

His replacement, however, was one scaly-skinned BITCH of a dude. Cloris Leachman with a dick. His face was cracked and dry like an abandoned desert highway. Small bits of dirt were artfully smeared over his cheeks and body for maximum fashion effect. Hints of leeks and scallions emanated from his armpits. His greasy hair was slothfully pulled back into a tight high-top ponytail, which I'm sure made brain-area blood flow impossible.

In his blind appropriation of grungian grime-chic, Lady Cloris looked like the guy I'm beating up on the cover of this book. Only Cloris was a lot skinnier and more wizened. Maybe too many dirty needles, who the fuck knows?

Apparently, Cloris was familiar with *ANSWER Me!*, and he wasn't very happy with it at all. He rolled his eyes ironically after catching a glimpse of the cheerful Easterlike pastels on the new issue's cover. "Oh, our FAVORITE," he spat.

"How many do you want?" I asked, smelling trouble.

"How many did we get last time?"

"A hundred and sixty."

He stuck his thin pinkie in his hooked nose and blinked disinterestedly. "Give us fifty."

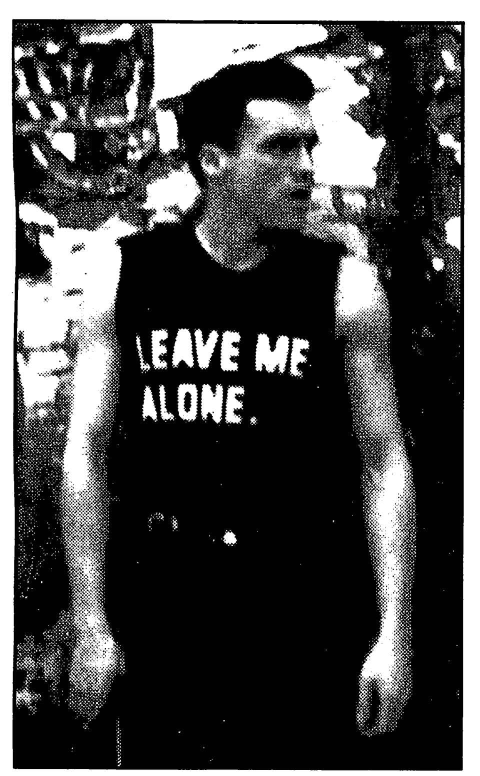
"Why?"

"It doesn't sell." Funny thing, too—he had lost our invoice. Couldn't pay us.

I didn't believe him. Trust is a luxury I can't afford. So I asked one of the stock clerks, and he told me they had sold 159 out of 160. The "it" that "doesn't sell" was one copy.

I walked back to the table where Cloris stood. He defiantly dug his wrists into his hips.

"Your stock guy says you sold all but one copy," I challenged, staring right into his eyes. I always stare into someone's eyes when I'm talking to them.



The jolly vacationer: Detroit, 1986.

"So?" Cloris said, looking away from my eyes.

"You said it doesn't sell. You lied."

"I don't care!"

"If you didn't care, why the fuck did you bring it up?" He had no answer for that one.

My life has been a recurring nightmare of interactions with people like Cloris. I'm polite; they have an attitude. They lie to me; I catch them in the lie. I call them on their shit; they don't want to talk about it. I've spent my life talking to jerkoffs who try to change the subject. And people wonder why I'm angry.

He likes to hide his past as a Mexican gang member, but WE HAVE PROOF.

Amazing. Four issues, and I still hate you all. Maybe more than ever.

It would have been easy to kill Cloris. Instead, I saved that fucking anger and came home to write. That's the essence of *ANSWER Me!*

So here I simmer, suffocated in this sarcophagus of an apartment by the stale smell of Hollywood's long-evaporated glory. Deadline. As soon as this introduction is written and the book printed, we U-Haul everything up to Portland. But for now, I feel STUCK. Unscrubbable molds colored pink and yellow cling to our bathtub. About every three hours or so, another apartment dweller's shower-swill comes bubbling up into our tub. Grey suds. Grey water. Brown hair. Black chunks. Sometimes red blood. It feels like we're living inside someone's bowels. Every wall is cracked from last January's 6.7 earthquake. Now it's a Tuesday afternoon in October. The temperature is STILL in the nineties, so we propped our front door open with two cardboard boxes. We need AIR. But our landlord peeped over the boxes about an hour ago. Caught me in my underwear. Reminded us that we haven't paid rent in two months. Wants us out by Monday. Time to write.

Anger is an art form, but not everyone's an artist. Just as there are poor lovers, there are poor haters. For better or worse, I happen to be gifted with a rare degree of anger. Can't quite get away from the thunderclaps inside my head.

I've been pissed-off for as long as I can remember, and I have an excellent memory. I've always suffered from the moose-jawed conviction that I'm right and they're wrong. Saw through my parents. Saw through the other kids. Saw through the nuns and priests. Saw through the teachers in college. Saw through every boss I ever had.

But I must credit my influences. I am a decomposing shit-pile of mutt-level genetics and culture. An incinerating Irish temper. A Roman Catholic interest in the forbidden. A French tendency to consider one's "work" more important than one's life. A hillbilly proclivity toward violent rebellion. And a distinctly Philadelphian sense that better days are behind us.

The pen is mightier than the sword, but why should I have to choose? I have two hands, so I carry BOTH. I write these articles as acts of desperation. I usually write when I'm shaking with anger. I choose every word as if it's my last. Thus, writing is hell for me. I'd rather jerk off with a handful of glass.

If you're shocked by this magazine, you must have had an easy life. We aren't trying to "push the First Amendment's limits," because an unembellished reading of the First Amendment doesn't *provide* for any limits: "Congress shall make NO law...." It's 1994. These are words and pictures. Grow the fuck up. The only thing disturbing to me is stupidity. The only thing I find shocking is willful ignorance. Personally, I'd censor anything which is dull, which takes care of almost everything, doesn't it? But we live in a world where dullness rules.

And for the longest time, I tried playing this dull world's dull game. Went to a dull journalism school and graduated at the top of my dull class. Wrote for a string of dull magazines presided over by dull editors. Got fired from a few of them for not being dull enough.

I squeeze the juice out of my Celtic nuts when I write. By the time I'm finished with an article, I usually have it memorized. And in everything I've ever written, I have one or two lines which are my favorite. Maybe even a paragraph. Something which makes me want to continue writing. And EVERY time I handed in an article to one of the aforementioned dull editors, they circumcised my favorite passages. My best stuff ALWAYS wound up on the newsroom floor. It was too "offensive...opinionated... self-indulgent...adjectival." I'd write article after sharp-fanged article, only to read something which needed dentures by the time it was finally printed. And not only would the dull editors suck the FLAVOR out of my writing, they'd usually mangle a FACT or two and sprinkle typos on top.

Early in 1991, an oleaginous editor at *Details* magazine commissioned me to write an article on masturbation in literary history. So I wrote it. And he rejected it, even after telling me to write it. Didn't even pay me a kill fee. Perhaps if I had written about shoes and vests, I would have had a chance.

I was left with an article called "Go Fuck Yourself" and no one to publish it. I also had a handful of interviews which had likewise been assigned and then killed by other dull magazines.

I couldn't bear to endure another editorial raping, so I looked for another answer. I remembered that a friend of ours once told us that our lives were more interesting than the shit we wrote about. Debbie had been writing, too, mostly puff-piece interviews for

degenerately low-end Hollywood casting magazines. But in her spare time as a secretary for a child-abuse hotline, she was also penning free verse about her unfettered hatred for children. We decided to organize Debbie's random statements into article form, which became "Babies Are Dirty." Thus was an unholy creature named *ANSWER Me!* hatched.

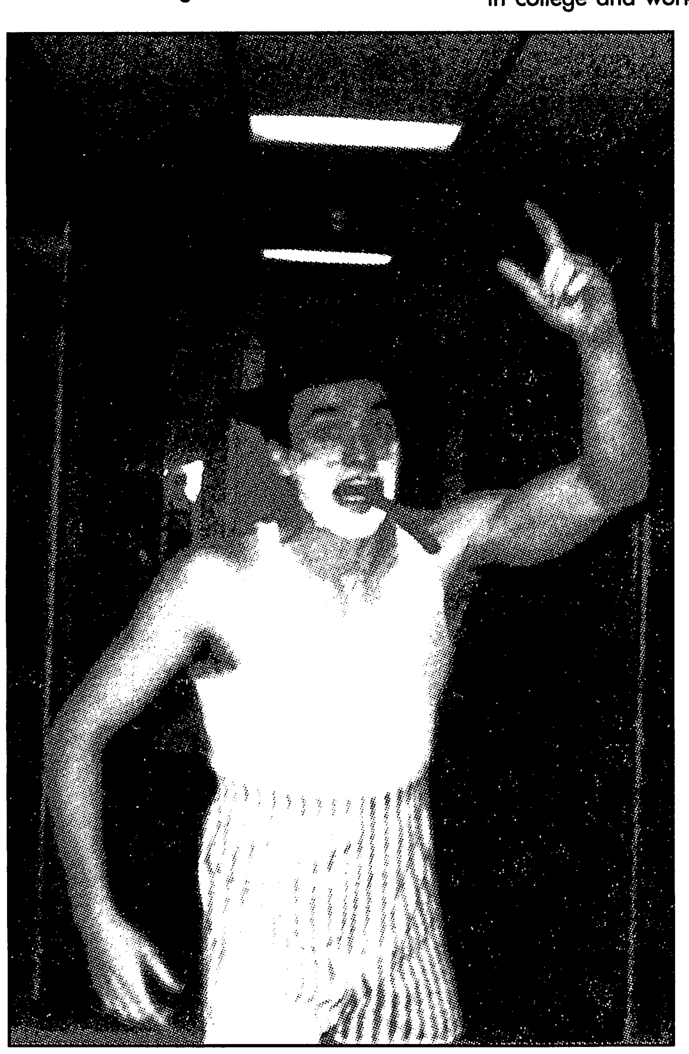
ISSUE #1
2,700 COPIES PRINTED
RELEASED 10/31/91

Pink 'n' purple day-glo cover. A picture of me wearing a wacky Satanic mask and pointing a MAC-10 at your face. An adversarial stance epitomized by the snapshot of us flipping the bird at our readership on the editorial page. The inaugural literary offering from Goad to Hell Enterprises was unleashed on Halloween. "This is the TRUE punk rock!" a friend commented. I realized we were destined to be misunderstood.

The individual articles in Issue #1 were an odd mishmash of rhetorical squiggles which had been festering around the Goad Abode. The Russ Meyer and Timothy Leary Q & A's were originally printed in the *Los Angeles Reader*, although I rewrote the intros for *ANSWER Me!* and went back to get some extra quotes from Russ. The idea for "24 Hours on Sunset" had been shot down by the *Reader's* publisher, but we decided to do it anyway. The Kid Frost and Public Enemy interviews were initially assigned by an L.A. trade rag called *Music Connection*, although they never saw publication within that worthy journal's pages. This issue also contains, to my knowledge, the last interview ever printed with proto-pimp Iceberg Slim, one of my favorite authors. I had originally blabbed with him for *Enclitic*, a leftish L.A. lit-rag which folded before the article was published. Iceberg died shortly after I spoke with him. I hope it wasn't my fault.

The inspiration for "People Ruin Everything" happened while we were enjoying a hotel hot tub, only to have our bliss ruined by flabby intruders. A typical *ANSWER Me!* peak experience.

The indefensible "Jonah 'Greasy' Stubb" piece was written back in 1984 while I was in college and working as a cabdriver. The "Got My Mojo Penis Workin'" article was actually a semi-bribe offered to a printer guy where I worked to cajole him into staying after-hours and printing the magazine.



Friggin' paparazzi! I'll...I'll...I'll MURDALIZE YA!

Of all the gory graphics we've ever published, I still find our first issue's centerfold the most unnerving. Originally printed in red ink, it depicts a dead body trapped under a car in Bakersfield. The cop in the background's diabolical white eyes are unretouched from the original negative.

Powdered-wig-wearing conservo talk-show host Wally George focused his old yellow eyeballs on our first issue and called us "the Armpit of Journalism." I took it as a compliment, coming as it did from the Anus of Broadcasting.



Patriot...Scoundrel...Raconteur...

ISSUE #2
FOUR PRINTINGS TOTALING 8,500 COPIES
FIRST RELEASED 7/17/92

Since we had nine hundred unsold copies of the first issue stacked in our kitchen, we prepared to meet the lessened demand by printing only two thousand copies of Issue #2. The printing process lasted for a sweltering month, during which we folded, collated, stapled, and trimmed each copy, just as we had with Issue #1. I'm a lefty, and I thought for sure that I had broken my left hand when it was accidentally crushed under a hydraulic paper trimmer. My flesh-mitten eventually mended, but that experience stands out as the most physically painful one of my life.

When our second issue hit the streets, it blew people's minds almost immediately, and why not? Who the fuck had ever seen ANGER like that? I had always been this pissed, but I had never fully realized it in print. The heightened hostility level was prompted almost entirely by a snotty negative review of *ANSWER Me!* #1 by some lite-fare rich-kid L.A. scene canaries. You know who you are, girls, and we thank you for the energy you've given us. As I told you then, we'll see who's more successful in five years.

With the interest generated by Issue #2, we finally sold out of #1. And we wound up printing #2 four times. For the much-ballyhooed "Wrath of Goad" editorial, we used a different bloody-fat-guy picture in the first two printings than we did for the second two. In the first two, we used a photo of a friend of ours which was taken on a hospital table after an L.A. gang member had sliced his face open with a machete. After the first two printings, our friend found Jesus and lost faith with our ability to properly convey his spirituality. So out of respect for his Risen Christ, his antipsychotic medication, and his chrome-plated .357 Magnum, we used a different pic for the final two print runs and for this book.

You can find no better reason for why I publish *ANSWER Me!* than Issue #2's article on Vietnamese gangs. Track down a copy of the May '91 *Playboy* and see what they did

to my original manuscript. I got paid four thousand dollars for that article. Although we sold out of all four print runs of Issue #2, printing was expensive and the cover price fatally cheap. Factoring in distributors' discounts and postage, we netted a five-thousand-dollar LOSS on that issue. But I'll do a hundred more issues of *ANSWER Me!* before I write another high-money article for dull editors.

There have been numerous accolades heaped upon our undeserving periodical, but I think we'd all concur that nothing could surpass the thrill of appearing in a Robby Benson movie. The film is called *Deadly Exposure*, available in discriminating video stores throughout this great land. Although a hilariously inept racial thriller enjoyable on its own ridiculous terms, we are nonetheless grateful to whatever prop person arranged for Benson to buy a copy of our second issue at an L.A. newsstand. The camera zooms in for a surprising number of seconds on Issue #2's garish yellow/orange cover before Robby buys *ANSWER Me!* and, strangely, the political journal *Z Magazine*. The scene has nothing to do with the rest of the movie.

Issue #2, of course, forever branded us as a serial-killer rag. We will, I fear, bear this burden the same way that Bob Denver must endure people screaming "Gilligan!" at him while he's trying to eat lunch.

ISSUE #3

13,000 COPIES PRINTED
RELEASED 7/19/93

Suicide was a topic close to my heart as a teen, surfacing intermittently as an adult. But although half of this issue was devoted to suicide, it was the alluring Nazi imagery which seemed to have the cash registers ringing. I purposely made both the front-cover and back-cover concepts enigmatic. To me, the image of Hitler looking up worried at the words "SUICIDE... FREAKS... GUNS!... PERVERTS" means precisely NOTHING politically. Likewise a drawing of Hitler crucified. But as I had intended when conceiving these images, folks from both the left and right interpreted them as sensitive to their cause. Yet others from both camps saw them as hostile to their cause. Confuse 'em and conquer 'em.

This is the issue that was simply TOO MUCH for a vigorously sanctimonious Brooklyn magazine distributor.

"You have the blood of six million Jews on your hands," he said to me quaverously.

"Tell me something, Joe," I countered in my intimidating baritone, "do you distribute Marxist literature?"

"Well, yeah, of course," he said. "A large percentage of what we carry is socialist-leaning."

"Well, then, you have the blood of forty million Russians on your hands, don't you, Joe?"

"It's not the same thing," was all Joe could say. And he was right—we're much more *entertaining* than the Marxists. Last I heard, Joe was calling up bookstores in the Midwest, begging them not to carry *ANSWER Me!*

But despite the frantic efforts of leftist censors, our third installment was widely enjoyed. The issue's cover artist tells me that he spotted a certain blond junkie Northwestern superstar rocker reading this "suicide" issue backstage at a show in Seattle only months before creaming his sensitive brains with a shotgun.

Our phone rings at 4 a.m. "Jim, what keeps you going?" asks an unfamiliar voice on the other end. "Is it money? Power? Free CDs?" I answer immediately: "No. The ASSHOLES keep me going." So keep talking shit: It makes me stronger. Go ahead, criticize us. Give us even MORE motivation than we already have. *ANSWER Me!* is passionate. In a world of bored affectations and critical "detachment," that's as uncool as it gets.

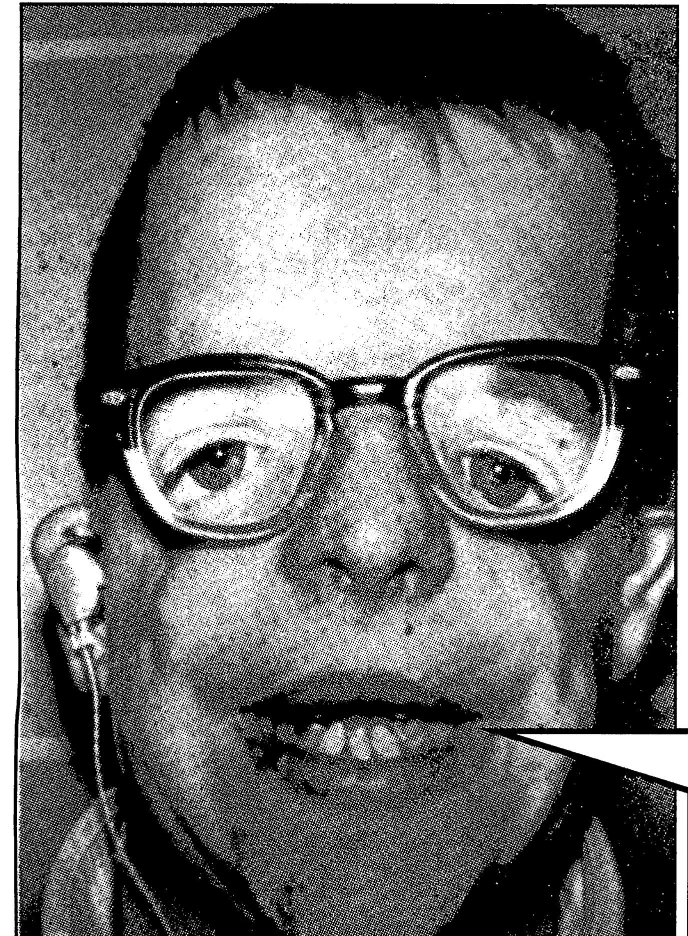
Our critics are a demoralized army of yodeling assholes. They dismiss *ANSWER Me!* as pure sensationalism, as if there was something wrong with eliciting pure sensations. The thematic turf which we cover rarely gets respect from the thumb-up-the-ass lit-boys. If your prose is disjointed and your layout sloppy, they dismiss you as schizo. If these conditions don't apply, you're calculating and insincere. You can't win, so we don't play.

We've seen people misspell every other word in their attempts to call us illiterate. Go ahead, ye cock-lickers who darest portray us as an inarticulate freak show—take us to task for the FACTUAL mistakes or the LOGICAL inconsistencies in *ANSWER Me!* Many have tried and failed. We had our shit together. THAT'S why we caught you by surprise.

We aren't as easily dismissed as they'd wish us to be. They start out trying to pigeonhole us and wind up stuffed in holes themselves. And I love to hear them STAMMER when they stand corrected. They hate to surrender their preconceived notions, but I offer them no choice.

The very fact that we accepted a book deal is likely to cause grousing, so let's clear out all the bullshit here and now.

Debbie and I are still of extremely modest means, and we'll present tax returns/bank-account statements to any of you pricks who try to dispute that assertion. In February of this year, I lost my job as a typesetter when the Big Boss Man caught me collating copies of a "hoax zine" we did called *Chocolate Impulse*. I have remained unemployed since. In late June, Debbie was fired from her secretarial job due to budget cuts.



The average* ANSWER Me! *reader.

If you bought this book, you're probably aware that our first three issues are hard to find. We're sold out of all of them. Almost daily, earnest fan-puppies have besieged me with entreaties to reprint these issues. But as an unemployed summer dragged onward and our money tree grew barer, we had to make a decision: Reprint the old issues, or get Issue #4 printed. There wasn't enough money to do both. We believed strongly in Issue #4, so we went ahead with that.

I'm only a collector of bad memories. It irked me to see heathen collectors and renegade Xerox bootleggers feeding buzzardlike off the carcasses of our first three issues. What was a bastard such as I to do? Then came a phone call. In his nearly indecipherable yet literate-sounding Scottish burr, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press offered me a new option: He'd pay to reprint our first three issues in book form. I agreed, as long as Das Goads retained all rights to our words and to any subsequent reprintings.

Being a control freak, I had strongly negative feelings about another hand in our financial cookie jar. I drove the gentlemanly Ramsey loony over most of the summer, wavering back and forth on the deal. The back page of blurbs for other AK Press books seemed to contradict my dogged "no ads" stance, but since it didn't appear within the context of the issues, I let it slip by. Most of it seems to be written in some Highlander dialect, so I don't understand a word of it. No harm done. Another big sticking point was that our acquiring of a book publisher seemed to contradict my denial of "shadowy financing" in Issue #2. But I couldn't supply my own financing. What would YOU do? All things weighed together, accepting AK's kind offer seemed the best way to make our old issues available.

Our entire "cut" of this book deal was two thousand free copies, not a penny of the King's coin. We are now forced to sell it door-to-door throughout America. At this point, Debbie and I are jobless misanthropists. We have to live off sales of *ANSWER Me!* or get gigs as hostile Portland truck drivers.

So here are the first three issues presented untampered, except that I've blacked-out the original Hollywood addresses and ordering information. Some notes about the book's price: Our first issue cost only two bucks, the second was two-fifty, the third a dollar more. Together, they cost eight smackers, although they're worth more than that now. So why does this purposely slick-covered book go for THIRTEEN FROGSKINS? Good question. If I had sufficient *centavos* to pay for reprints, I swear on Nicole Simpson's grave that I'd charge less for it. But even with the added price, it STILL costs less per page than most of the shit out there. Not only is it cheap relative to other books, it's less expensive per page than your typical dirtball fanzine. Don't believe me, snapperhead? It ain't outlandish to claim that the average fanzine is forty pages and costs two bucks. That works out to a nickel per page, and you may have to chew on some ads along the way. This book totals three hundred and twenty pages not counting the cover and costs a lucky thirteen cannolis. That's FOUR cents a page. We're still one of the cheapest values in publishing. Yet there will be griping. No one will mention that I charge you nothing for postage. And you won't even believe that I wrestled the publisher down from fifteen bucks. Or that I rejected the T-shirt idea immediately. Finally you get a book that doesn't have any blank pages, and you're still complaining. Shame on you.

But despite all the carping by scene fleas, I'm in a nearly avuncular mood, so jump up on Uncle Jim's lap and let him learn ya something. There is really only one rule to live by: DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT.

What you accomplish in life is limited only by your imagination and the fear of reprisal. Life is too fleeting and unrewarding to have to live with the added onus of indignity. The denial of one's inevitable demise is what causes most of the astringent blandness in the world. When your existence ends



The high cost of cable television forced them to find other means of entertainment.

most certainly in death, there is no such thing as "going too far." There are no "lines" you should fear to cross except the finish line. Playing it safe is the most dangerous thing you could do.

ANSWER Me!'s mission has been successful: We inspire hatred both in those who love it and those who hate it. Rage is all the rage. We've helped to widen the Hate Market and have allowed people to feel good about feeling shitty. Magazines don't kill people; people kill people. But this magazine may be an exception.

I'm baffled that people are terrified of *ANSWER Me!* but not of the world situation. Take an honest look around you. The ship isn't sinking, it's sunken. I'm certainly able to write subtle prose, but the times do not call for subtlety. People are so stupefied these days, they NEED to be beaten over the head.

ANSWER Me! is the *TV Guide* of social dissolution. It is a crack-laced intravenous bag poisoning the bloodstream of a civilization which has seen better days. It's a dick in the mouth of a stuttering society. And it's your choice whether or not to swallow.

I was born screaming, so I figure I'll make as much noise as possible before I die. One day I hope to publish something which shocks even ME. Maybe then I won't be so angry anymore. ■

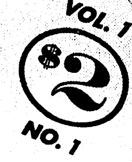
JIM GOAD
LAST DAYS IN HOLLYWOOD
OCT. '94



GUY AROCH

Who are YOU callin' racists...and sexists...and, um, fascists?





IN THIS ISSUE, I ASK:

WHAT'S MORE REPULSIVE THAN A NEWBORN BABY?

WHY DO PEOPLE RUIN EVERYTHING?

WHY DOES RUSS MEYER LOVE BIG BOOBS?

DOES TIMOTHY LEARY HAVE ANY BRAIN CELLS LEFT?

CAN PUBLIC ENEMY CONQUER SATAN?

WHICH EGYPTIAN GODS MASTURBATED?

CAN I DRIVE 24 HOURS ON SUNSET WITHOUT GETTING MURDERED?

PLUS CHICKS 'N' CARS ★ PHALLIC CANDLES ★ HOLLY WOODLAWN ★ ICEBERG SLIM
DEATH IN BAKERSFIELD ★ KID FROST ★ TWELVE STEPS TO HELL ★ DEPRESSING FICTION



VOL. 1 ★ NO. 1

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

I'M the editor. I'm supposed to determine what type of articles you, the readers, want to see. My job is to process what goes into these pages, to make it palatable for a wide cross section of society. I'm expected to find the right blend of news and entertainment so I can make this a worthwhile reading experience for you.

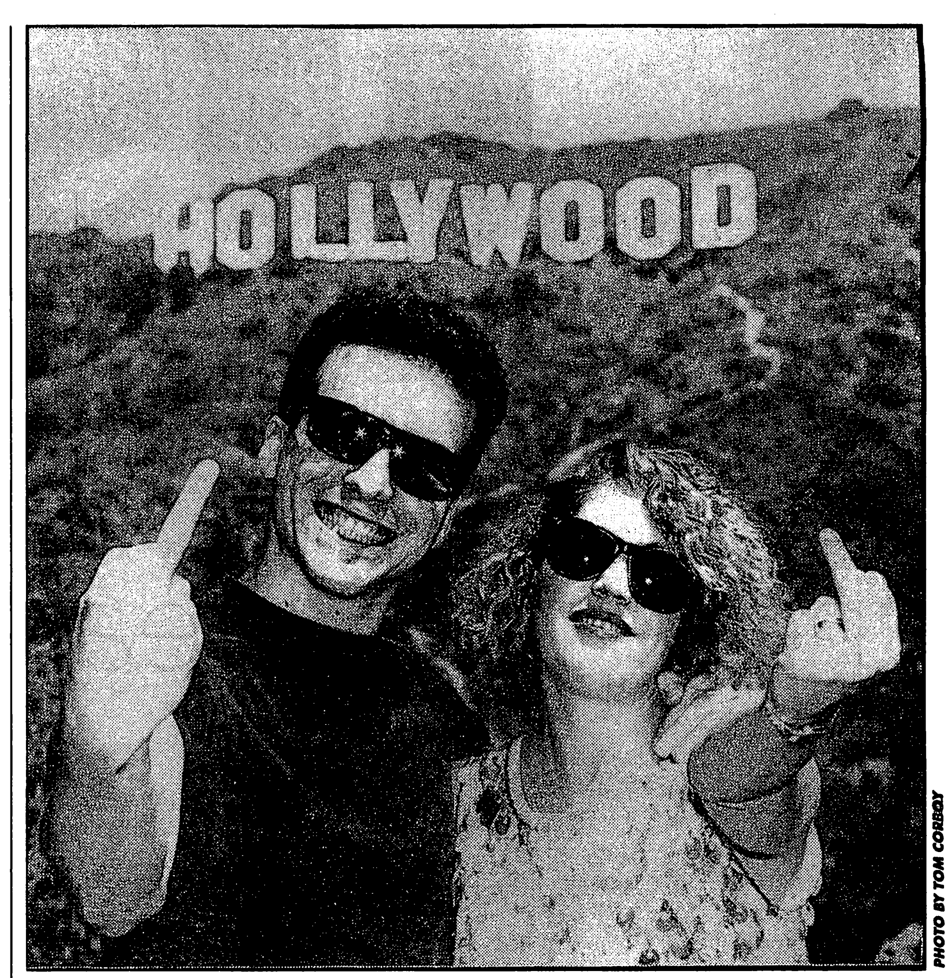
Well, **FUCK YOU!**

If I cared about what *you* thought, I'd be writing for *National Geographic* or something. I know that you innocently picked this up, but *please* put it down and walk away. You're diving into a bottomless tub of shit.

Forget what all the other mags tell you—society's only real "progressives" are the deviants and mutants. Look at evolution—fish who didn't deviate never became amphibians; frogs who didn't mutate never became reptiles; conformist snakes never became mammals, etc. Normal humans will remain humans, and they'll be subjugated by the digital monsters of the next few millennia. Sound psychotic? Wait until you read the *rest* of the magazine.

Here's my point: Working outside of cultural pigeonholes is the only way you'll ever get close to the truth. ***ANSWER Me!***'s journalism operates from a deep-rooted mistrust of human nature. We call it "misanthropology." We don't belong to any sociopolitical clubs. We're not conservative *or* liberal. Members of the "counterculture" usually don't think any more originally than the powermongers and working classes they disdain. In their own way, they're every bit as dogmatic and intolerant, and possibly more so. Liberals would probably blanch at the notion that they're fascists, but they seem to spend most of their time trying to suppress things they don't like. They also share this in common with conservatives—they'd probably like to shut us up.

I'm a dangerous motherfucker—white trash with a brain. I'm the son of an Irish-Catholic plumber, not your standard journalistic demographic. If I couldn't write, I'd probably kill—myself or (preferably) someone else. I've gotten into trouble writing for other magazines (local, national, and international ones) because I'm supposedly not "objective." But I feel that anyone who doesn't tell you where they're coming from isn't a journalist, they're a liar. "Objectivity" is a ruse. Do reporters seriously think they're not part of society's cause-and-effect? A person's background colors everything they do, including what they choose to report and what they leave unsaid. The jerkoffs in power don't really want to change anything, so they prevent their scribes from getting involved. That's tough shit. I've got an "authority problem," and I don't do what I'm supposed to.



The editors (Jim and Debbie Goad) send a heartfelt message to our readers.

That's why ***ANSWER Me!*** doesn't have any ads. Once you fall into the trap of coddling advertisers, you might as well bend over and spread 'em. People wouldn't accept ads in movies or books, so why don't they complain when they're plastered all over magazines? We're in this biz to make some worthwhile shit, not to rake in cash. We're too real to attract many advertisers, anyway.

ANSWER Me! is basically a two-person operation—yours truly and my wife Debbie. We wrote all but two articles (*Chicks 'n' Cars* and *Got My Mojo Penis Workin'*). Debbie (the only person in the world worth trusting) wrote *Everything's Trash, Babies Are Dirty,* and *People Ruin Everything.* Blame me for the rest. I also did all the typesetting and layout. If you think that we're just dumb psychos, take the ***ANSWER Me!*** challenge—find a single typo. You'll be unable to catch any mistakes. You see, we're *smart* psychos.

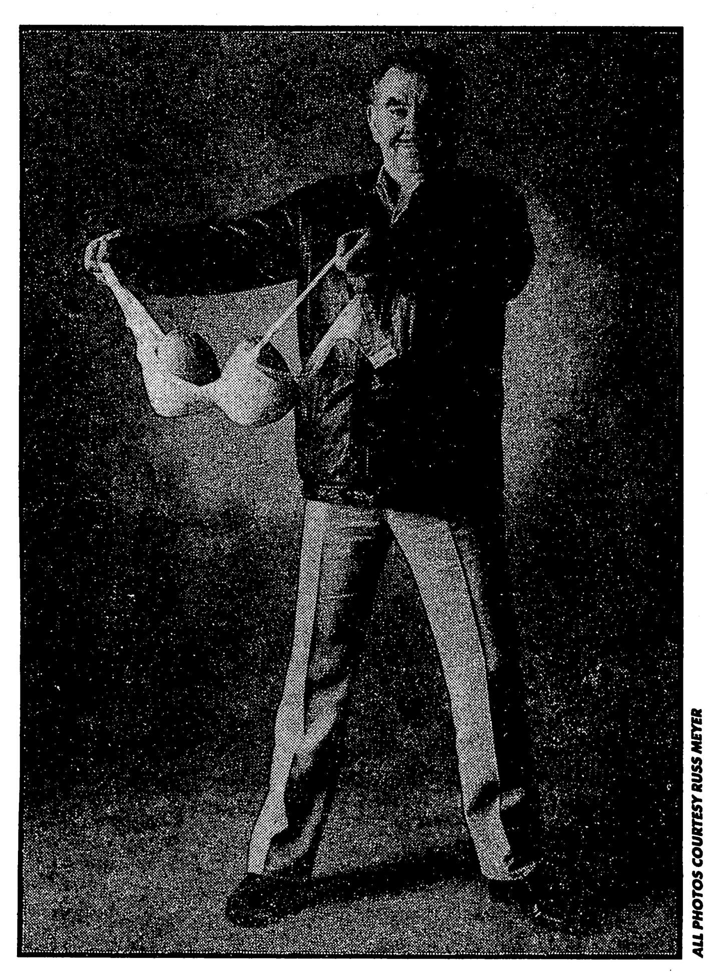
If you hate what we're doing, that's more of a reflection on you than it is on us. Our aim is to amuse, provoke, and maybe jog your lazy-ass mind out of the stupor it's been in. Which leaves one thing unresolved about ***ANSWER Me!***—what the hell is the question? That's easy—**WHY ARE YOU SO FUCKING STUPID?**

Jim Goad

Jim Goad
Editor/Publisher

RUSS MEYER

the world's breast director



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY RUSS MEYER

Russ Meyer: "I haven't been taken particularly seriously by the majors. They're afraid of the taint."

"TITS.

He's the guy who does the tits, right?" Well, *yeah*: Russ Meyer's films *do* feature women with abnormally large tits. His mammarian epics *do* star females who jut toward the audience at Mt. Rushmorelike angles. Big tits are to Russ Meyer's movies what big crowds are to Cecil B. DeMille's.

But before you dismiss Russ Meyer as a dirty old pornographer, probe beneath the breasts. With heavy implication and almost no genital shots (*Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* shows nary a nipple), he created the most obscenely entertaining films ever made. In his parables of small towns with big women, self-indulgence always triumphs over false piety. Biology squashes morality, just like nature intended.

A master technician, Russ splices shots together quicker than you can say, "premature ejaculation." Haji, one of his many female stars, says, "I believe Russ is sort of a genius as a director, as a cameraman. I mean, I believe he had a camera in his hand at birth, you know? It's the way he edits.... People imagine they saw more than what they really saw."

The director, sixty-nine, looks like Ernie Kovacs and has the broad, Dickensian wit of W.C. Fields. He's finishing an autobiography, *A Clean Breast: The Life and Loves of Russ Meyer.* Never one for understatement, he says the tome will cost three hundred and fifty dollars, contain twenty-five hundred photos, and weigh fifteen pounds. He's currently stopped production on his seventeen-hour autobiographical film, *The Breast of Russ Meyer.* Insoluble creative struggles? No: "I want to go fishing, do a lot of fuckin', good food, and all the rest."

Russ continues to inspire new fans, as evidenced by the hordes of rock bands who, uh, "borrow" his films' titles. (Ask Mudhoney,

Motorpsycho, Faster Pussycat, or Vixen where they got their names.)

ANSWER Me! interviewed Meyer in his Lake Hollywood home, newly painted on the outside in bright, roaring green with loud orange trim. As Russ explains, perhaps synopsizing his career, "Anything to offend the neighbors."

Use as many adjectives as you can to describe the type of woman you look for when casting a film.

Pneumatic. Abundant. Mammiferous. Magnum-busted. I've got so many words in the book. Ballooning. Giganzos. I like 'cantilevered.' My favorite's 'pneumatic.' They gotta be busty, really busty; that's what my pictures are known for. The public is satisfied that it will see something that's a little outrageous in that area, and now even more so. But the satire and the humor is the thing that makes them live.

The men in your movies are routinely beaten, humiliated, and made to look stupid by an Amazonian female breed. Why all the clumsy guys?

I was influenced in my early life by Al [*Lil' Abner*] Capp. If you study his cartoons, the women are all bright, voluptuous, and/or ugly, but they're the ones who really control the men. The men are their willing tools, as it were. So I thought that was a pretty good peg to hang it all on. Got away from a lot of female criticism of my so-called art.

How do you respond to persons who say your movies are sexist?

I say, "Yeah. Right. That's true." I found a long time ago never to, or by and large, don't get up and try to defend your position. Just admit to all your frailties and shortcomings. After a while, the questioners walk away.

There's a certain biblical justice in your earlier outings such as *Lorna* and *Mudhoney*: Greed, lust, and murder run rampant until the last minute or so, when all the sinners get zapped.

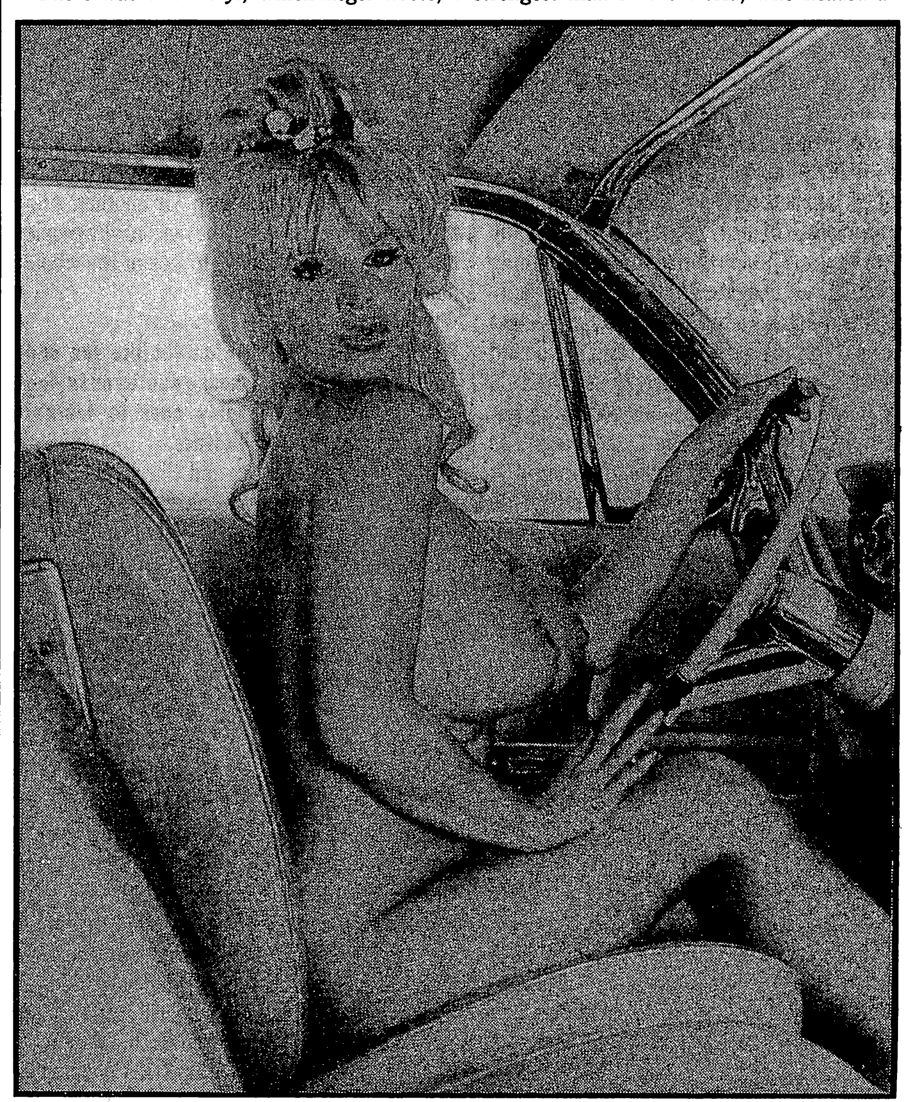
Well, at the time it was important to have some redeeming virtues to the film because of prevailing prosecutions and persecutions.... But if I did *Lorna* over, or *Pussycat!* over again, I'd have the leading lady or villain just walk away from it. The convict would end up sleeping with Lorna's aunt, who would have big tits, too. I think it would be more fun to do it that way.

You once said *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is your greatest achievement.

Well, it's the most satisfying of all because of Roger [Ebert] and I being *asked* to come to Fox to do the film. In my early years after World War II, I tried to get a job there as a cameraman. Forget it. Just as well, because I wouldn't have had the opportunity to learn filmmaking as I did doing industrials. So all things equal, I think *Dolls* really represents my having come to the mountain. We made the film exactly as we wished to make it....I haven't been taken particularly seriously by the majors. They're afraid of the taint. I'll tell you a great line by a man that followed Zanuck after he got kicked out.... He said to my agent—I had a good agent who went there with another script—and he said, "We want no more of Meyer *or* Ebert, in spite of his Pulitzer."... We chose, Ebert and I, to make a picture that *we* wanted to make, and that fucker's gonna live a lot longer than most anybody.... The film is thought so highly of, just as *Pussycat!* is, by another generation altogether. And I say, "Why?" I don't know why, really. I made the films to please myself. Maybe there lies the key, more than anything else—they're very personal.

What were some scripts or ideas which never bore, as you might say, abundant, buxotic fruit?

There was *Viva Foxy!,* which Roger wrote, which we kind of planned to use [former wife] Edy Williams in, but I determined that our marital bliss wasn't all that blissful, and I didn't want to have her end up directing the movie....It was a good project: a Caribbean island, a soldier of fortune played by Charles Napier, [and] revolutionaries. Existing there is a voluptuous girl who has been pretty much running things. She's in jeopardy of losing her head, her tits, or whatever. That's a quickie summation of it all. It was a good thing, a good script.... *Up the Valley of the Beyond*, which I felt very strongly about, which Roger also scripted. It was a thing on Elvis Presley, who was over-the-hill sexually, [Obscure Nazi figure] Martin Bormann discovered that the pituitary gland of the female beaver would bring everlasting sexual prowess. Of course, there was Elvis—we called him King Gilette—and we had sons of the Nazi hierarchy, who drove around in Volkswagens, and the Godfather, with his younger people driving Fiats, and they were warring all the time. There was Elmo Temblor, the strongest man in the world, who headed an



Nice set of wheels, huh? Babette Bardot bounces in* Mondo Topless *('67).



Marital bliss: Hal Hopper rapes his wife (Antoinette Cristiani) in* Mudhoney *('65).

island bastion in the West Indies. Then we had Moishe Sabra, head of the Israeli intelligence. He had to skulk around in an Arab's burnoose, which he hated to do, trying to put the finger on Martin Bormann again.... It's about a seven-million-dollar picture, and when I go back to see [fiancée] Melissa [Mounds], I'll go to New York for one day to a stockbroker who seems to be inclined. It looks pretty good. But the majors are scared to death of me. They just don't want any part of Meyer. The X is the most poisonous thing you could ever imagine. Now, NC-17 is exactly the same thing. It's a bad label.... If this doesn't develop, I think Charlie Napier and I, who did *Supervixens*, we'll do, I'd love to use the title *Big Tit Rumble*. I think it's a marvelous title, but we'd have to maybe call it *Big T. Rumble* or *The Return of Harry Sledge*. I would bankroll it myself, because I've got bucks. But I would make it for like four hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I'd love to. I'd get it right out there and barnstorm with it, and I bet we'd make one hell of a lot of money with this picture. Get some independent distributors, and the price is right to make it.... And we'll do it with a small crew: five people, eight big superchicks, including Melissa, and she says, "I'll get all the big tits you want." And she will.... We can make my kind of movie for seven million—Howard Hughes, Adolf Hitler, you know, the whole works in there—or I'll make one with Harry [Charles Napier] and eight big chicks.

Many in the film industry see you as an outsider. How did working independently with a small crew make your films different than big-time Hollywood vehicles?

When you ask a question like that, maybe it answers something. Maybe that's why the films are kind of special. Maybe that's why they're going to live for a hundred years. Maybe that's why the cassettes sell so aggressively. I've got thirteen cassettes in distribution, and instead of the numbers declining, they grow every year. Sell more every year.... If you stop to look at a major film, how many times does someone want to look at the film over and over again? My films have a lot of vignettes. You can look at just one vignette every now and then. Or another. And that may be the answer to the reason why people buy them—you don't have to look at the whole damned movie again.

Plenty of exploitation films feature sex and violence. I once read someone quoted as saying your movies are the only ones to feature *simultaneous* sex and violence.

Both of them, the sex and the violence, are jokey. And they're outrageous and exaggerated. The violence, by and large, is overdone. Like in *Supervixens*—the bathtub [murder], the dynamite up the ass—it's all not to be believed.

What is the difference between your work and the cheap video porn of today?

You mean the hardcore? Well, I hate the term 'softcore.' I like the word 'limber-core.' I mean, they're not to be compared. I don't want to put anybody's work down, certainly not that. I think the interest in hardcore is waning. They're not being made in the quantities that they once were.... My films are unique unto themselves. You can't compare 'em. They're not in the same category. The same people don't buy them. I mean, people write me letters and say, "I don't wanna look at that kind of hard stuff. I like yours, because..." etc. and so forth. So there's no comparison, and I don't think they should be compared. I have a unique genre that is strictly Russ Meyer. No one else is in that genre, and it's strictly mine and mine alone.... Really, what has happened—my films just don't die.... The hardcore guys are really in some deep shit. The FBI are harassing the hell out of them. Really trying to put 'em out of business. I'm sorry to see it. God, everybody should have their own shot. But there are damned few hardcore films that have reached the status of being classic—you know, *Misty Beethoven* and, of course, *Deep Throat*. I just wouldn't do a hardcore film, because the humor wouldn't work, nor the satire. The ladies that I work with would not, of course, be a part of that. And it doesn't entertain me—I'm always looking to try and get a laugh somewhere.

The hedonists in your films seem more honest and mentally stable than the Puritans.

I like to go after the Puritans whenever I can. I always say, "Jesus Bakker" or "Jesus Swaggart." That phony TV evangelist in the glass church. They're all the same. They're all corrupt.

What's the best line of dialogue you've ever written?

Oh, I couldn't answer that. I'll tell you the best line that a girl in one of my films came up with. Raven De La Croix [star of *Up!*] and I had gone to Europe to promote the film. And when reporters would press her with too many questions, she would say, "What do I know? I'm only a woman."

I have a unique genre that is strictly Russ Meyer. No one else is in that genre, and it's strictly mine and mine alone.... Really, what has happened—my films just don't die.

Tell me the sickest, most twisted, and extreme level you've ever reached in filmmaking.

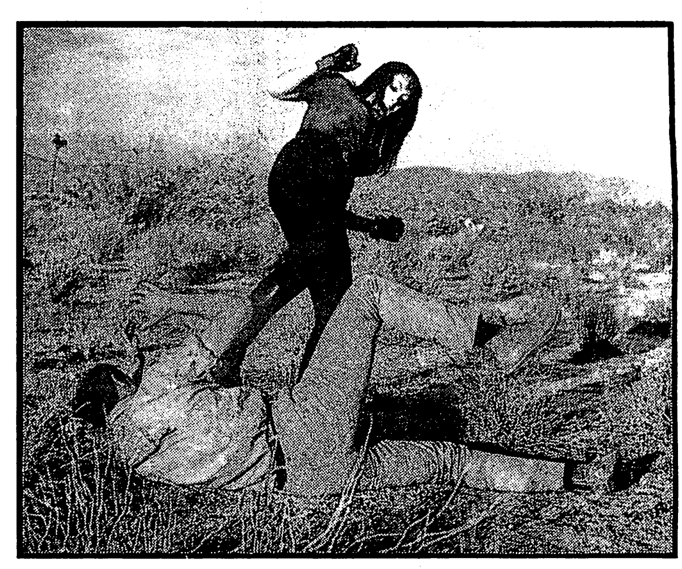
Sickest? I don't consider anything I've done as being sick. No child pornography. No abusing animals, for that matter. Nothing I've done in my estimation has been sick.

Are you as meat-and-potatoes as your leading men?

I'm generally with one lady. I'm not interested in having three or four girls at one time, simultaneously or sporadically. Straight, good ol' sex. Just hunker down and work at it, alright? Belabor the girl's nether regions, alright? That's it. If somebody wants me to do something a little strange, I take a hike.... Anyway, we're still at it. Big bosoms and square jaws. ■

Meyer's Breast

At press time, RM Films is planning to release three of Russ Meyer's early films on video:* Eve and the Handyman *('60),* Wild Gals of the Naked West *('62), and* Motorpsycho *('65). The following titles are already available:



Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! ***('65): Tura Satana makes a feminist statement.***

The Immoral Mr. Teas *(Color, 1959)*
Described by Meyer as "America's first classic skin-flick," this voyeuristic oddity is barely an hour long. Filmed around Hollywood without dialogue, the narrative concerns Bill Teas, endowed with the ability to see through women's clothes. The females are mostly depicted luxuriating in pinup-style poses, perhaps a vestige of Meyer's earlier stints as a *Playboy* photographer. *Mr. Teas* unbuttoned the blouse for frontal nudity in American cinema, but it lacks the danger in Russ's subsequent work.

Lorna *(B&W, 1964)*
A tale of sexual frustration and infidelity among white-trash river rats. Lorna (Lorna Maitland), whom the ads call "too much for one man," is stuck with a dumb, cloddish husband unaware of his wife's needs. No problem—she wanders into nearby woods and is raped by an escaping convict, with whom she instantly falls in love. Justice wins in the end, though, as Lorna is impaled on a meat hook while the Grim Reaper watches.

Mudhoney *(subtitled:* ***. . . Leaves a Taste of Evil!****, B&W, 1965)*
Sweaty Depression-era fable of sin, greed, and alcoholism. Hal Hopper plays an abusive, booze-swilling arsonist scheming for control of a Missouri farm. Stuart Lancaster, who looks and acts like Buddy Ebsen if Buddy Ebsen had been possessed by Satan, is the farm owner. Stars three nearly indistinguishable blonde women: one battered, one a mute, and one (Lorna Maitland) an ersatz Daisy Mae. Franklin Bolger is a rancid, senile preacher whose thirst for vengeance leads to both his *and* Hopper's death. With Russ Meyer in a cameo as a shocked onlooker.

Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! *(B&W, 1965)*
The opening line is, "Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to violence," and it just gets better from there. If you see no other Meyer film, see this one. Shot in demonic black-and-white, it traces the story of three go-go dancers (Haji, Tura Satana, and Lori Williams) who hop in their race cars and go on a murder-kidnapping-swindling spree in the California desert. Tura Satana dominates as Varla, the trio's dikey, karate-chopping leader. The three wind up on a ranch owned by a lecherous cripple called "Old Man" (Stuart Lancaster), who is terrified of trains and is father to a brawny cretin named "The Vegetable." If God existed, She would have proven it by giving Lancaster an Oscar for his performance. With dangerous-sounding cocktail-lounge music and title song by The Bostweeds: "Pussycat, she's livin' reckless/Pussycat, she's ridin' high/If you think that you can tame her/Well, just you try."

Mondo Topless *(Color, 1967)*
Boobs, boobs, and more boobs, all bouncing to the ceaseless din of screeching guitars. Starts with filmic examples of the "topless movement" in San Francisco's North Beach and goes on to feature breasts from all around *le monde.* Meyer's lone documentary, with mock-serious narration by John Furlong: "Yes, for the very first time, you will hear actual, on-the-spot, recorded tapes consisting of sensitive comments and opinions by the very topless dancers wildly gyrating before your eyes!"

Good Morning and Goodbye! *(Color, 1967)*
"How would you define... nymphomania?" Meyer's funniest film, an amazing small-town soap opera of impotence and sexual redemption. Stuart Lancaster plays Bert Boland, a wealthy-but-limp ranch owner. His excuse for striking out in bed is, "I'm not a machine. I'm not a hired stud." His wife Angel (Alaina Capri), described as "a lush cushion of evil perched on the throne of immorality... a monument to unholy carnality and a cesspool of marital pollution," resorts to getting her action in strangers' Cadillacs. She finds solace in the burly arms of Stone (Patrick Wright), a rock-quarry foreman who has designs on her seventeen-year-old stepdaughter. Angel can't cry foul, though—she's trying to seduce her stepdaughter's boyfriend! Meanwhile, Bert wanders into the forest and is captured by a witch (Haji) who can have sex only one night a year. Guess which night it is? Bert's libido is restored, and his family regroups around his newfound virility.

Motorpsycho ***('65): Haji struggles with the concept of love.***

Common-Law Cabin *(Color, 1967)*
Incest and intrigue at "Hoople's Haven," a remote Arizona resort. "Sure, the desert winds blow on schedule, but they blow many ways and carry more than the scent of water hyacinths and flowering verbena. And in a certain longitude and latitude, you can even smell garbage." Alcohol, too—almost everyone in the film drinks too much. Hoople's Haven hosts three vacationers. John Furlong plays an aging heart patient whose hornbag wife (Alaina Capri) can only speak in double entendres. Both die. The other guest (Ken Swofford) is a high-rolling detective and rapist who gets creamed at the film's end by a speedboat. Jack Moran, who wrote the screenplay, stars as a stubbly boondocks lodge owner who can't keep his eyes off his bikini-clad daughter. To entertain the lodgers, Babette Bardot runs screaming through grassy marshes while hoisting flaming sticks over her head, then dives from a cliff. As befits the year it was made, both the music and color are hallucinogenic.



Simultaneous sex and violence: Ken Swofford (violence) and Alaina Capri (sex) in* Common-Law Cabin *('67).

Vixen *(Color, 1968)*
Adultery, lesbianism, communism, and racial politics in late-sixties British Columbia. Erica Gavin plays the title role, an insatiable tart who mounts Mounties and steals husbands (and wives). Her husband is a bush pilot who owns a mountain lodge and good-naturedly fails to see that Vixen fucks all their guests. In the best scene, Vixen "bonds" with her brother while he's taking a shower. Don't miss Vixen's incredible "fish dance," either.

Supervixens *(1975)* and **Beneath the Valley of the Ultravixens** *(1979)* followed, each more elaborate and less focused than the original. Both are still thousands o' times better than your standard sex movie. Especially recommended is Charles Napier's hilarious performance in **Supervixens** as Harry Sledge, a psychotic cop who can't get it up.

Cherry, Harry & Raquel! *(Color, 1969)*
Marijuana smuggling along the California-Mexico border. Harry (Charles Napier), a macho gringo border-patrol agent, teams with Tontoesque sidekick Enrique (Bert Santos) to stop the mysterious "Apache." There's a hysterically improbable scene where a brave, suicidal Enrique continues to fight after being repeatedly run over by the Apache's Jeep. The editing style features rapid, epileptic montages with lots of nudity in front of penis-shaped desert formations. Raquel (Larissa Ely) gives instructions on the creative use of ice cubes and spins around nude on a comfy chair with Cherry (Linda Ashton).

Beyond the Valley of the Dolls *(Color, 1970)*
The rock 'n' roll saga of The Carrie Nations, a psychedelic female trio who sing songs like "Come With the Gentle People." Celebrity film critic Roger Ebert wrote the screenplay, an attempt at a moral statement about Hollywood excess. (Legal pressure forced Meyer to run a disclaimer at the beginning which disassociated the film from Jacqueline Susann's *Valley of the Dolls.*) John La Zar stars as Z-Man, a hermaphrodite socialite who invites his jet-setting friends to a party, doses them with peyote, and sets about shooting, stabbing, and decapitating them. Plenty of "heavy" music and an appearance by the Strawberry Alarm Clock. Produced on an obviously bigger budget than Meyer's independent films.

Up! *(Color, 1976)*
"Adolph Schwartz," an exiled Nazi, gets tied up, whipped, and butt-fucked in the opening sequence. While reclining in his Jacuzzi, he's eaten alive by a piranha. From then on it's the typical bag of Meyerisms: kooky rock songs, spines being snapped, and horny sheriffs, all set against California redwood country. A particularly tasteless one, narrated by Francesca "Kitten" Natividad.

Russ Meyer made several other films not released on video, among them **The French Peep Show** *('50);* **This is My Body** *('59);* **Europe in the Raw** *('63);* **The Seven Minutes** *('71); and* **Blacksnake!** *('72). He was also hired as the original director of* **Who Killed Bambi?**, *the Sex Pistols movie which later became (in Julien Temple's hands)* **The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle.**

Finders, Keepers, Lovers, Weepers *('68) is available on video, but it isn't an ANSWER Me! favorite.* **Fanny Hill** *('64) has also been released, but it's missing Meyer's alchemical mix of lust and menace. Russ isn't nuts about it, either.* ■


Timothy Leary's Dead...

...nah, but he ain't

Alright, maybe I was nervous. I mean, this was the "high" priest, the infamous ex-Harvard professor who turned on a generation, the man who did for LSD what Paula Abdul now does for Pepsi. I've dropped my share of acid, but he's the one who put the *idea* in my head. I started sweating as I drove up serpentine roads to his Beverly Hills home. I was frightened about what I'd find: the onetime Pied Piper of Youth now an ogre living in a cave? A blabbering burnout with feta cheese where once was brain matter? What if he blows my mind and I can't find my car keys or something?

I shouldn't have worried. Timothy Leary's been a senior citizen for six years, but he's still as sharp as a silicon chip. Friendly, too. In fact, he was *so* friendly, he:

1. Brought me some ice water;
2. Let me play with his big, hairy dogs;
3. Gave me a computer printout of a revised afterword for his autobiography, *Flashbacks*;
4. Showered me with magazines to read. (Tim likes to highlight and annotate entire paragraphs, just like any good student.)

When he finally sat down, the first thing out of his mouth was, "What's the greatest thing you've ever done in your life?" (Telling my parents to get lost.) As we sat high above the smoggy L.A. basin (it looked like we were high above the clouds), we dug into a forty-five-minute gabfest. He listened carefully to each question, paused, and then gave his answer in a solid, digestible block. He lobbed neurogenetic one-liners with a craggy New England inflection. The quip I remember most was, "People say I've gone off the deep end. What the fuck end am I *supposed* to go off? The *shallow* one?" Just Say Know, indeed.

But, like I said, I was nervous. I fucked up. I had tuned my cassette player to 'radio,' not 'tape,' so I recorded forty-five minutes of scratchy AM hip-hop, not the Leary interview. Gulp. Tim, cool enough to lend me a book, consented to *another* round of questions, this time by phone:

Your aunt used to admonish you to "Conform, Timothy, conform." Why'd you disobey her?

I don't know. Seemed like a good idea. I didn't like the kind of life she led. She wasn't very happy. She was very concerned about what the neighbors thought.

How are you "totally Celtic, totally Druid?"

I don't think I am *totally*. What they say about the Celtic and the Druid tradition is that they're very independent, fiercely resistant to state authority. They're very poetic. Their use of language is extremely important to them. They're very ceremonial and indulge in intoxicated ceremonies. They just don't fit easily into conformist social situations.

What risks come with being a frontiersman?

Well, it depends on the frontier. You're never gonna have a company paycheck. But you're asking specifically about me. I've been living in America, which is an extremely free, safe country for dissidents. In any other country in the world, I would have been permanently jailed or probably silenced.

Today's media tend to "Mansonize" the sixties.

The news, commentary, and opinions that appear in newspapers, magazines, and TV are totally manufactured and designed to produce realities. Produce artificial realities. And the techniques used to channel thought or to deal with dissidents—one is to ignore them; the second is to trivialize them and make them seem foolish and unimportant; and the third is to demonize them. In the case of Manson, Manson is no threat to the American security, believe me. He's a person that probably should be kept in jail, but his power to create mischief is totally limited. [He's a] totally impotent, powerless person. He's used as a demonic, diabolical figure to characterize an entire generation of seventy-six million people.

You've said that what used to be called 'spiritual' is what we now call 'digital.'

Yes. Using a computer to digitize your thoughts, your images, your sounds, and combining them at the speed of light, hurling them over telephone lines or through radio waves, is trading realities which are immaterial, invisible, incorporeal. Write down the list of all the words that used to define 'spiritual,' and you'll find that quantum, or digital, communication—using computers—meets that definition.

You tend to view American learning institutions as prep schools for ignorance.

Every educational administration is charged by society—this is throughout history—with the mission of preventing young people from thinking for themselves and instilling in young people the traditional and conventional rituals and points of view. By definition, educational systems are factories of conformity and conformist thinking.

When did you decide to discard traditional Eastern thought?

There are several things about the oriental religions that I don't like. One is the concept of 'master' and the authoritarian aspect. The second is the anti-woman aspect. Oriental gurus, the men, tend to dress up in robes, and many of them preach, or even *practice*, celibacy. And third, the oriental religions' basic theories anticipated quantum physics, [but] their methods of communicating and practicing thoughts are four or five thousand years old.

Why the "stand-up philosophy" in nightclubs? Aren't philosophers supposed to be sullen, hermetic self-flagellants?

[Laughs] Never heard *that*. A philosopher is someone who performs intelligence, who loves wisdom and performs it publicly. Basically, a performing philosopher thinks for herself or himself in private or public. Everything I do in writing, giving interviews like this, talking in academic halls or nightclubs, is thinking for myself on my feet. By definition, philosophers can and should perform anywhere and are people who are interested in interacting at the philosophic level. I'm going back to the Socratic method. Although, throughout human history, most wisdom, certainly most dissident ideas—novel, innovative ideas threatening to the establishment—have been passed down in terms of humor. People like Swift or James Joyce. Eminently comic. Or Thomas Pynchon—his great works, epic, encyclopedic works—are very hilarious. Comedy and humor are the keys to wisdom, because they're based on the Einsteinian notion of relativity, of putting two ideas

gettin' any younger!

together in a novel way. Or interactions that are implausible or strident or revealing. Basically, humor is a quantum mechanical device—it fissions structure, and it collapses traditional meaning. That's a relief—expressing laughter.

I don't trust Jeane Dixon—what's *your* forecast for the future?

The next ten years are going to be extremely volatile. Ignorance and religious warfare and violent repressions will occur, because the next ten years are gonna be a period of incredible change, and change makes people nervous, especially when they see the traditional structures collapsing. People get panicky. And politicians are very skillful at inciting and inflating hysteria of this sort, so you're going to see repressions and witch-hunts.... On the other hand, you're going to see an enormous increase in intelligence in the next ten years as more and more human beings understand how television and the establishment control our thoughts, and more and more people will begin to start thinking for themselves. ■

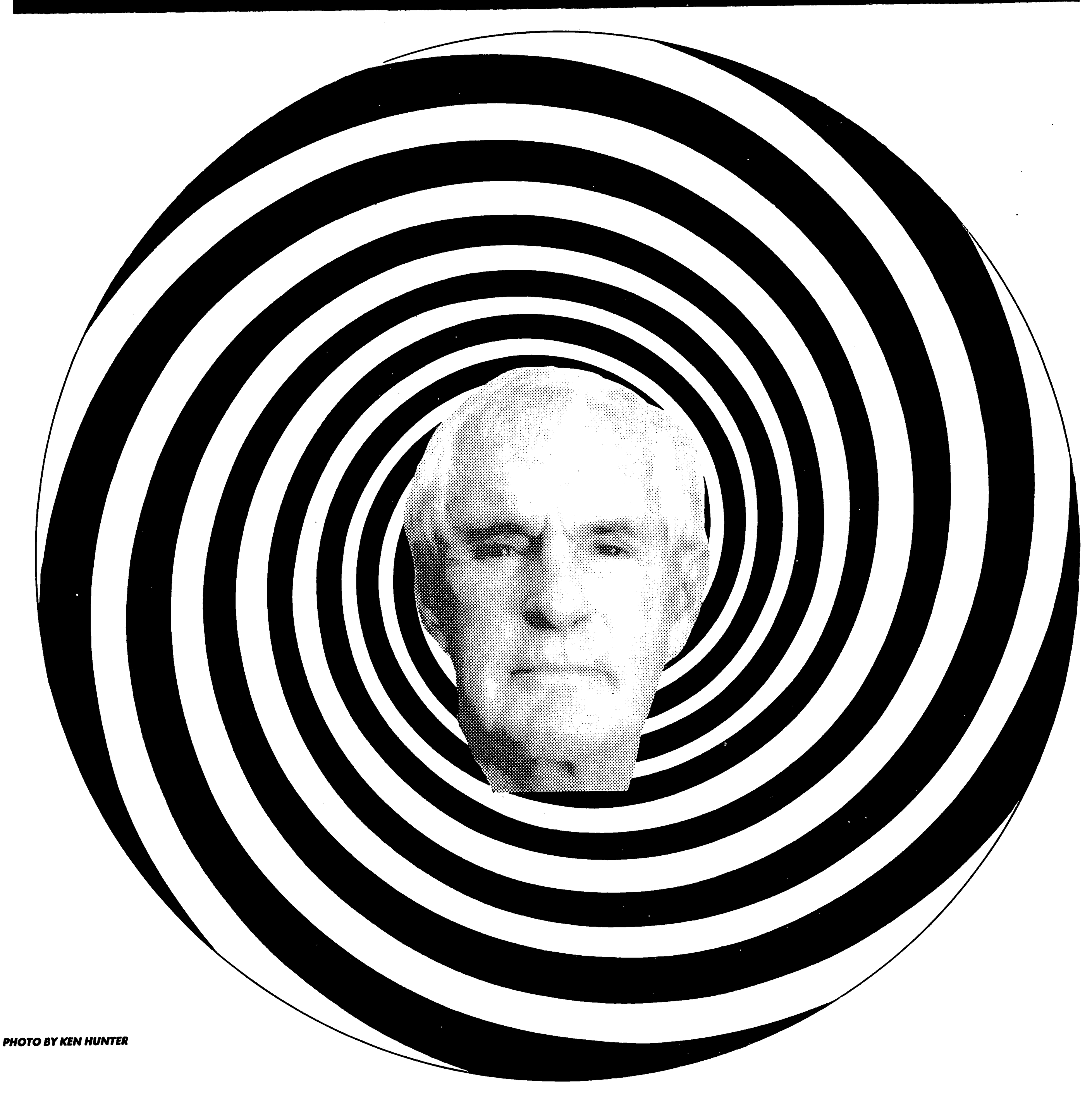


PHOTO BY KEN HUNTER

Everything's TRASH



PHOTO COURTESY MYSTIC FIRE VIDEO

Ex-Warhol Star **Holly Woodlawn** Bitches About New York, L.A., and the State of the Arts

In 1970 I sat in a dark Greenwich Village theater waiting to see the latest Warhol film, *Trash.* I was ready for anything.

Holly Woodlawn lit up the screen portraying Holly Santiago. Looking like Alice Cooper with buck teeth, she spends her days combing through garbage to furnish her filthy apartment. She lives with a junkie, played by Joe Dallesandro. Joe's strung out from mainlining heroin and can't get it up. Holly, frustrated with Joe's softness, grabs a beer bottle and frantically, comically jerks off with it. In another scene, Holly pretends to be pregnant so she can get welfare. The government agent (Michael Sklar) promises approval if Holly gives up her only shoes, a pair of silver platforms she found in the trash. Holly refuses. She is denied welfare.

Trash depicts New York when it *was* New York: insane, ugly, twisted, creative. The film's dialogue is improvised, and the shooting-up scenes are real. Holly Woodlawn gives one of the funniest performances in motion-picture history. Oh, by the way—Holly's a man.

It's 1991. Holly Woodlawn's sitting next to me in a coffee shop on Santa Monica Boulevard. I'm ready for anything.

Holly tells me he was born Harold, an only child from a lower-middle-class family. Growing up in Florida bored him. Rather than face summer school, Holly dropped out. Accompanied by a friend, he thumbed his way up to Manhattan. Holly's exodus was later immortalized in Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side":

> Holly came from Miami, F-L-A/
> Hitchhiked her way across the USA/
> Plucked her eyebrows on the way/
> Shaved her legs, and then he was a she....

Holly put on a dress and some makeup, and people believed he was a chick. While hanging out in the Village, he befriended Jackie Curtis and Candy Darling, two female impersonators from Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company. He began performing a cabaret act, taking the 'Holly' from Audrey Hepburn's character in *Breakfast at Tiffany's,* Holly Golightly. The 'Woodlawn' was chosen in honor of the Bronx's Woodlawn Cemetery.

Holly met Warhol at a screening for the film *Flesh.* "When I was introduced to him," Holly recalls, "all he said was, 'Oh, you look so glamorous!' That's it." Warhol later cast Holly as the leading lady in *Trash.*



PHOTO COURTESY MYSTIC FIRE VIDEO

Holly puts her best face forward for welfare agent Michael Sklar in* Trash *('70).

"There was no script whatsoever," Holly says. "The only thing was, like, (director Paul) Morrissey would set up a scene. He would tell me what it was about, give us a sense to get started, and cameras rolled. I made a hundred and twenty-five dollars for *Trash,* and it grossed *millions.*"

Holly says that despite his poignant portrayal, audiences remember him for the beer-bottle scene. "I will never live that down. Everybody thinks that I really did it. That's the only thing they remember. It was not my idea. I certainly got into that one, didn't I? I'm a true method actor."

In 1971 Holly co-starred with Jackie Curtis and Candy Darling in *Women in Revolt,* a comedy about women's lib. He appeared with Divine, a drag queen from John Waters's films, in the 1976 play *Women Behind Bars.* During that year, Geraldo Rivera's first TV show debuted locally in New York. The premiere episode's subject was transvestitism, and Holly was invited as a guest. When questioned about gender, he commented, "Who cares what you are, as long as you're fabulous?" Geraldo didn't reply.

"At that time," Holly says, "there was our own little group, our own little section in New York. We were all Warhol stars. We were the beautiful people. We were the famous ones. We all had our fifteen minutes every night. Now there's nothing like that.... About that time I was living in Max's Kansas City....We used to be out every night and stay up for days. Of course, I was on *speed*....When I first came to New York there was lots of pills. Downs. Mainly Tuinals and ups. Tuinals, Nembutals, Seconals, and black beauties." Pills, booze, excitement. Ordinary souls felt like stars.

But people wearing suits invaded New York. Holly split Manhattan in the late eighties and moved to Los Angeles. He visited New York last year and found it "hideous....New York is a fucking pit-hole. It's all yuppie. Everywhere you go, they're *crawling* all over the place. All over the place." He says Max's Kansas City is now a deli. "I'm just glad that I did it when everything was happening, honey. When it was the last chance, 'cause I don't think there's going to be something like that again."

Now Holly's in Hollywood, land of casual plastic surgery. He's had his trademark buck teeth straightened. He studies at The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising and works part-time for a telephone party line. Holly doesn't have a car and uses RTD buses to get around town.

People in L.A. are mellower and friendlier, right? Wrong: "Nobody's ruder than the people in this fucking city. They have no upbringing whatsoever. No manners. No nothing. These people in L.A. are the worst. To me, they're worse than the French, and that's a tough one to beat—the French. They think they're much better than whatever. That really bothers me. I think it has to do with the movie industry. People get rich real quick and become stars. People are told they're fabulous by other people that are not so fabulous."

Holly says he'd like to act again but complains, "Every time I've gotten offered a movie role it's been as some drag queen. Fuck that shit. I wouldn't mind playing a drag queen, but a role like I did in *Trash*."

Not that this country's screaming for another transvestite to shove a beer bottle between his legs. "It's such a horror out there, as far as the art scene goes," Holly says. "It's like Nazi Germany. Now you can't even show your art. It's 'pornography.' It's ridiculous. They're telling artists they can't create. This country's really sad, and it's gonna get worse. I can't wait to get the fuck out of here."

Holly's considering a move to Amsterdam. He travels light. When he left New York, he says he packed two suitcases, bought a ticket, and "What I didn't sell, I left over there. I always get new memories and new stuff."

His autobiography, *A Low Life in High Heels*, was released in the fall of '91, coinciding with Holly's forty-fifth birthday. "The only point [the book] brings out is, 'Do whatever the fuck you feel like doing.' It's a funny book. The only message is, 'Have a good time. Fuck everybody.' . . . Most people think I'm dead." Andy Warhol, Jackie Curtis, Candy Darling, Edie Sedgwick, and Divine are.

So what's cool now? "Absolutely nothing. Everything I see, I've seen it done already." What would make it good again? What would it take? "If people like us weren't poor. A little more equality, a little more balance as far as bucks are concerned."

But there's *no* equality. I tell Holly that people disgust me nowadays. Holly reassuringly replies, "Well, look what's out there! Thank God we're *not* like *them*, honey."

With such hardcore boredom abounding, Holly says that he likes to keep folks at a distance. "I always sing to myself when I walk down the street. I still want people to think I'm crazy when I walk down the street. Especially around here. I sing mostly Barbra Streisand songs. I mean, if that doesn't offend anybody, nothing will."

We discussed people's herd mentality, how so few are willing to stray from the flock. But guess what? The loud group of yuppies sitting next to us drowned us out. ■



PHOTO BY JULIA SLOAN

More fabulous than Julia (or Eric) Roberts: Holly today.

"YOU WANT SOMETHING TO EAT, BUDDY?" asks Kid Frost, leading his minions into Virgin Records' cushy interview room. He spreads his lunch, purchased from a truck across the street, before him: tuna-salad sandwich (with sprouts), one 7-Up, a shrink-wrapped carrot cake, and ketchup-splurted fries. The Chicano rapper bites into a tomato-smeared, crinkle-cut, carbohydrate treat.

Like Richie Valens, Kid Frost comes "brown 'n' proud" from East L.A. Also like Valens, his records are half-English, half-*Español.* An army kid, he spent his early years hopping across the globe from one military base to the next. His family returned to the *varrio* when he was a teen, and he entered Montebello High. At an all-night backyard party in El Monte nine years ago, Arturo Molina, Jr., picked up a mike and became Kid Frost. He released some independent singles, but they had no photos or liner notes to signify he's Latino. Hearing his raspy purr, people assumed he was black.

His hit single "La Raza" ("The [Mexican] Race") dispels all ethnic confusion. "'La Raza' is a Spanish version of [Ice-T's] 'Colors,' basically," Kid says. "I came across hard with the lyrics in 'La Raza' because I wanted them to know the strength



COOLER THAN A FRIGIDAIRE?

of a Chicano," he says, a leather 'Aztlán' medallion slung around his neck. "Aztec warriors were straight-out chopping people's heads off, I mean, for no reason. Just *shoooo!* Gone." His homies stare, not so much acknowledging me as tolerating me. "I get some negative feedback from some Chicanos who have mainstreamed and act white now," says Kid. "They're 'coconuts,' you know—brown on the outside, white on the inside." I feel vaguely like a piña colada.

Spanish rap may sound like a new thang, but don't get your *cojones* in an uproar. Latinos are rap's unsung heroes. Hip-hop's birthplace, the South Bronx, is more Puerto Rican than black. A salsa beat percolates through the earliest Sugar Hill Records singles. Latin group Prince Wipper Wip and the Fantastic Five were pioneers alongside better-known (and much darker) Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five. And only a crabby Muslim would deny that the baddest break dancers were Hispanic. "It's not a black art form like everyone thinks," Kid says. "It's an *urban* art form. It's from the streets.... As long as there's urban culture and urban streets, there will be rap music.

"We're just doing our own trip, man," he says. "We're just showing our strength. I mean, from my heart. And we are *cholos* [Chicano gangsters], man, there's no hiding it. We're not trying to hide it. I'm not trying to be *this* guy one day and *this* guy another day. I am, you know, I'm a Chicano. A young Chicano. I mean, that's how it *is.*"

When "La Raza" was released, its slurred, stop-and-start beat throbbed from every well-hung car system in East L.A. Frost's voice crawled like a scorpion over icy aahhhs, tinkling xylophones, and a narcotic sax solo. The video made you want to get your Yugo chopped, lowered, and slapped with hydraulic lifters.

Ever *been* to East L.A.? Take a drive—it just might scramble your perception of who the *real* foreigners are. "How can you call—when there are more Hispanics in L.A. and California [than any other group]—us a minority?" Kid asks, flabbergasted. (I didn't call him a minority.) "I mean, we're not



PHOTO BY DENNIS KEELEY

Kid Frost: "I'm a Chicano. A young Chicano. I mean, that's how it is."

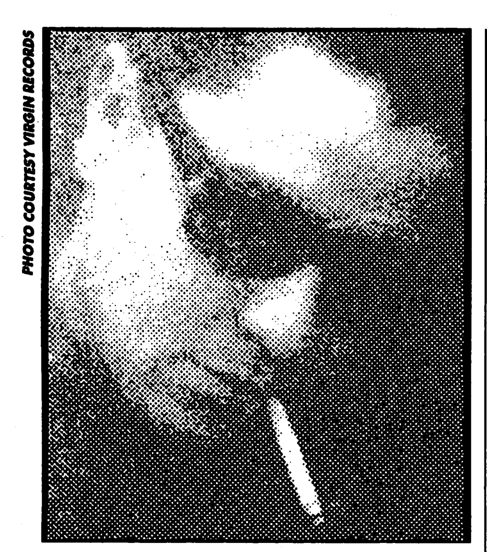


PHOTO COURTESY VIRGIN RECORDS

"You call me a wetback, then get back. Because you're the one that's gonna get set back."

the minority no more; we're the majority. But we're still in the darkness. I mean, you still stereotype us and don't give us the credit that we deserve." What did I do to offend him? "*Recognize* us, man. I mean, that's all we want. I mean, we got it goin' on. . . . It pisses me off when people call me a wetback. But I got lyrics for 'em, too, man. It's like, 'You call me a wetback, then *get* back. Because you're the one that's gonna get *set* back.'"

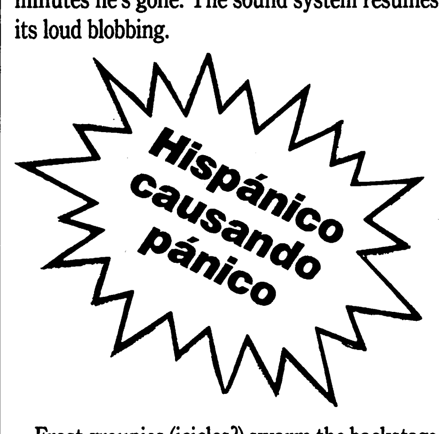
He points to a long scar on his hammy left forearm, telling how he was bum-rushed at night on East L.A. train tracks and had to deflect a blade aimed at his face. He recalls, almost wistfully, how he got jumped by white bikers at a Pomona carnival, but some *vato* threw him a steel rake. Kid stands and pantomimes how he dug the rake's teeth into one biker's back, slamming him into the dirt. And then there was the time he threw some poot-butt through a 7-11 window. I sit silently and watch the words to his best song, "Homicide," become flesh.

"I write twenty-four/seven [hours a day/days a week]," he says. "Last night I came home and I started writing. When I think of stuff weird, that's crazy, I write. But that is not even *considering* the rap ability I have of just spontaneously freestyling (rhyming off the top of one's head). A lot of people can't freestyle the way I do, because when I just think of it, I'm like five or six or seven words ahead of it all." Your loyal scribe is skeptical that *anyone* can rhyme spontaneously. Kid proceeds to rhyme for a full minute using only the props around him (the Virgin Records logo, a picture of Jimi Hendrix hanging on a brick wall, a Sony VCR, his soda, and that tasty-looking carrot cake):

This is somethin' ya been searchin'/
Just like that tag on the wall right there says **Virgin**/
Franklin D., me, the K-I-D, the F, the R, the O/
Built to go and on a roll/
You know why I got ya trippin' and slippin' into another frame of mind?/
Just like the **wall** I stand behind/
Solid concrete, built by the **brick** that's thick/
Of the wall that will stand tall/
And me, the K-I-D, is funky fresh/
I love to roll like this in a mix with **Jimi Hendrix**/
Standing in the mix I stand, when in command, it's like that/
But you wanna stake mine—*Que pasa? La Raza*/
You can't say *nada*, you don't know me/
The TV set you're watchin' with the video on **Sony**/
Well, I got the DAT to rhyme like this/
'Cause I'm comin' up/
Just like **7-Up**/
I'm chillin' and dealin' on the live talk/
I'm gonna make ya walk with me and chill with me the funky beat/
'Cause you're on a take/
You're like a fake/
Just like the big chunk I bite from the **carrot cake**/
And I'm outta here. Peace.

My skepticism drops along with my jaw—he's an MC by the purest old-school standards.

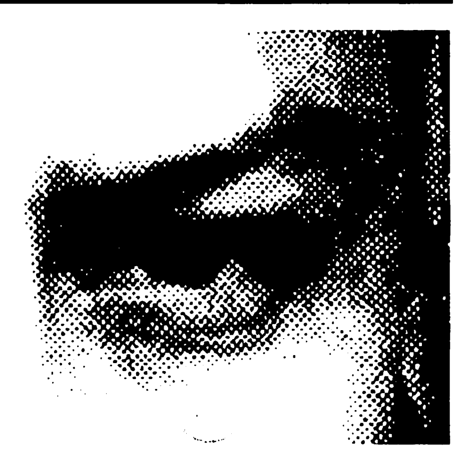
The bass rumbles like a Sherman tank later that night at Mr. J's Hollywood. Kid ambles onstage in a brown suede jacket, looking like the giant *cucaracha* in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis.* It's a simple act: just Frost, his DJ, and four motionless *cholos*. "I'm a motherfuckin' *Hispanic Causing Panic*!" he growls, flinging copies of his debut LP into the pit. Resembling an Aztec John Belushi, he shimmies through an odd platypus dance. "Where's all *la rrraza*?" he asks, and the Chicanos scream and wave their arms. The girls seem especially lathered. Kid messes with his lyrics like a spatula nudging a Sloppy Joe sandwich, changing whole verses and busting freestyles off the wall. In twenty minutes he's gone. The sound system resumes its loud blobbing.

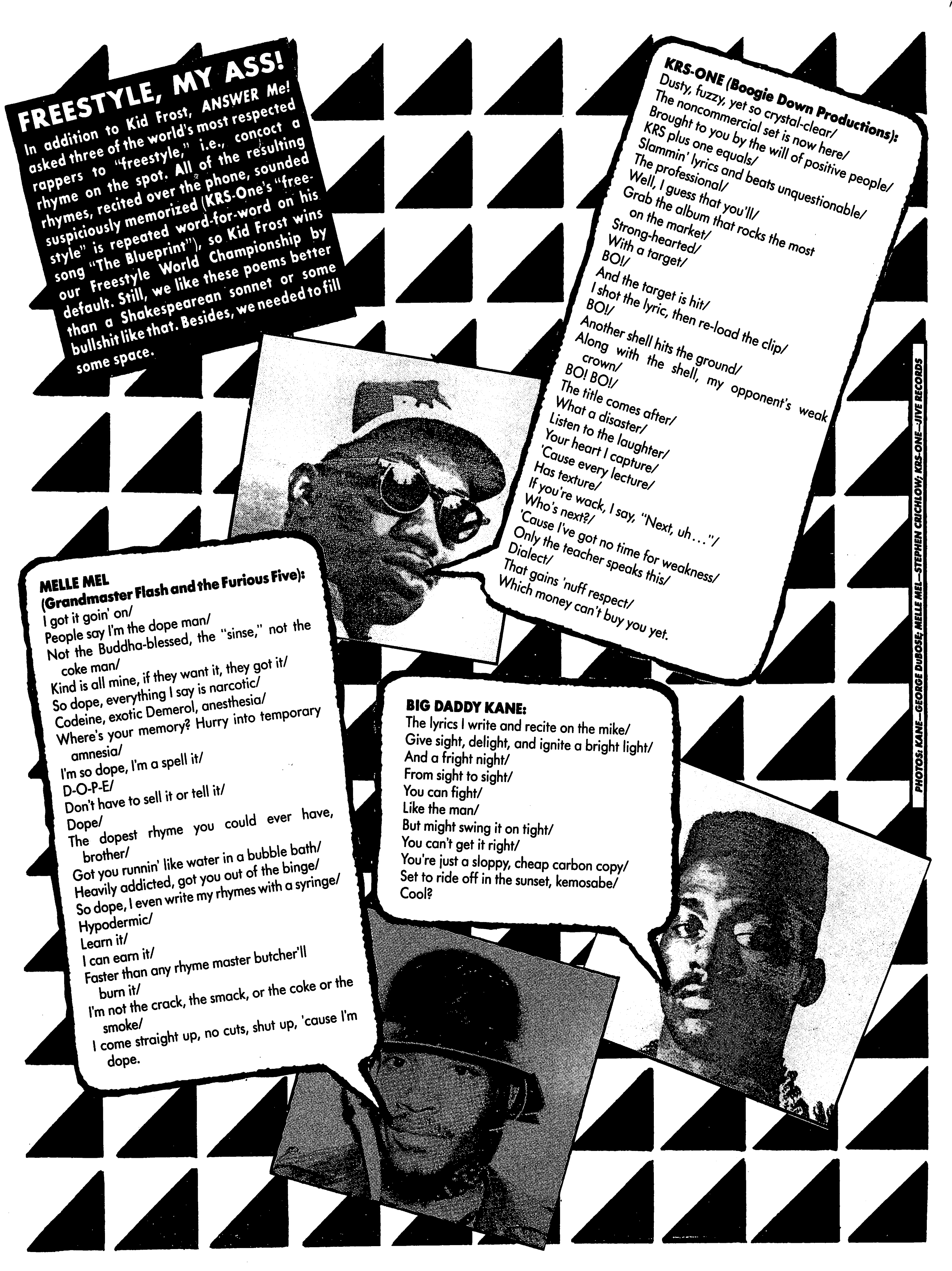


Frost groupies (icicles?) swarm the backstage entrance. Teased-and-sprayed young women shove each other, hoping it's their butt he takes home tonight. Kid, a former boxer, is led out by a train of security guards. The women tag along, aching to be Frosted. At the curb, a bodyguard shakes Kid's hand and laughs, "You haven't changed."

As his white limo cranks up, Frost and his crew look primed for weenie maneuvers. Behind the limo, his DJ's monster truck bumps that old Animals bass line. Females are yanked into both vehicles at the last second. It's time to go plant some seeds for *la raza*. ■







FREESTYLE, MY ASS!

In addition to Kid Frost, ANSWER Me! asked three of the world's most respected rappers to "freestyle," i.e., concoct a rhyme on the spot. All of the resulting rhymes, recited over the phone, sounded suspiciously memorized (KRS-One's "freestyle" is repeated word-for-word on his song "The Blueprint"), so Kid Frost wins our Freestyle World Championship by default. Still, we like these poems better than a Shakespearean sonnet or some bullshit like that. Besides, we needed to fill some space.

KRS-ONE (Boogie Down Productions):
Dusty, fuzzy, yet so crystal-clear/
The noncommercial set is now here/
Brought to you by the will of positive people/
KRS plus one equals/
Slammin' lyrics and beats unquestionable/
The professional/
Well, I guess that you'll/
Grab the album that rocks the most
on the market/
Strong-hearted/
With a target/
BO!/
And the target is hit/
I shot the lyric, then re-load the clip/
BO!/
Another shell hits the ground/
Along with the shell, my opponent's weak
crown/
BO! BO!/
The title comes after/
What a disaster/
Listen to the laughter/
Your heart I capture/
'Cause every lecture/
Has texture/
If you're wack, I say, "Next, uh..."/
Who's next?/
'Cause I've got no time for weakness/
Only the teacher speaks this/
Dialect/
That gains 'nuff respect/
Which money can't buy you yet.

MELLE MEL
(Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five):
I got it goin' on/
People say I'm the dope man/
Not the Buddha-blessed, the "sinse," not the
coke man/
Kind is all mine, if they want it, they got it/
So dope, everything I say is narcotic/
Codeine, exotic Demerol, anesthesia/
Where's your memory? Hurry into temporary
amnesia/
I'm so dope, I'm a spell it/
D-O-P-E/
Don't have to sell it or tell it/
Dope/
The dopest rhyme you could ever have,
brother/
Got you runnin' like water in a bubble bath/
Heavily addicted, got you out of the binge/
So dope, I even write my rhymes with a syringe/
Hypodermic/
Learn it/
I can earn it/
Faster than any rhyme master butcher'll
burn it/
I'm not the crack, the smack, or the coke or the
smoke/
I come straight up, no cuts, shut up, 'cause I'm
dope.

BIG DADDY KANE:
The lyrics I write and recite on the mike/
Give sight, delight, and ignite a bright light/
And a fright night/
From sight to sight/
You can fight/
Like the man/
But might swing it on tight/
You can't get it right/
You're just a sloppy, cheap carbon copy/
Set to ride off in the sunset, kemosabe/
Cool?

PHOTOS: KANE—GEORGE DuBOSE; MELLE MEL—STEPHEN CRICHLOW; KRS-ONE—JIVE RECORDS

PUBLIC ENEMY

The Brothers Battle Beelzebub

Flavor-Flav's plane is late arriving from Phoenix, and everyone's freaking. Chaos rules backstage at Hollywood's Greek Theatre, one of the last stops in Public Enemy's fifty-five-city *Fear of a Black Planet* tour. Earlier, Queen Latifah and Digital Underground turned in passable (yawn) sets. In embarrassing clown outfits, Kid 'n' Play run through the last of their dance routines. Public Enemy's on next, and Flav's nowhere to be found.

Chuck D, the militant sourpuss to Flav's court jester, is understandably distracted. DJ Terminator X sits mute. A humongous bald dude named Crunch taps away at a Nintendo game. Chuck cocks his arm back and flings a miniature basketball against the wall.



PHOTO BY GLEN E. FRIEDMAN

Flavor-Flav: late but happy . . .

This is the second time I interviewed Chuck D in this theater. The first was on the night before P.E. unleashed its landmark *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* LP. The band earned critical hosannas for that disc and the following single, the, uh, whaddayacallit—*anthemic*—"Fight the Power." Then Professor Griff, leader of P.E.'s karate-kicking Security of the First World, made some comments blaming Jews for global "wickedness." The group (Public Enemy, not the Jews) temporarily disbanded. When the dust settled, they reunited and cut the *Fear of a Black*



PHOTO BY JULES ALLEN

Shout at the devil: Flavor-Flav (mammoth timepiece), Chuck D ("P" cap), and Terminator X (goatee and shades), flanked by the Security of the First World.

Planet album. Griff was dismissed after allegedly calling MC Serch of 3rd Bass a "Jew bastard." More trouble came in 1990, when P.E. distributed literature espousing Dr. Frances Cress Welsing's theories. (According to Welsing, white racism is rooted in Europeans' shame about their "color deficiency.") Chuck D doesn't seem eager to discuss all the media turmoil, except to say it's been "well-documented."

"You tell people what you are, and people still don't believe you," he says with a hint of fatigue. "What's goin' on in New York is that a lot of the black people are tired of the bullshit liberalism and, you know, the shake-your-hands-with-a-smile-and-stab-you-in-the-back-with-a-pitchfork [attitude]. They're tired of that shit."

Alright, Chuck, what about white folks—am I a devil because I sunburn easily? He retrieves the basketball. "You gotta understand that whole 'devil' terminology comes from a collective racial reverse attitude. The collective racial attitude, like holding a mirror and this is the ways that have been done by this collective race as opposed to God's laws of being fair and equal. And that's where the terminology 'devil' came in. But see, it's been used and misused and taken out of context to the point where we think of serpents. You know, truth is also stranger than fiction. The things that the quote, unquote, 'European,' I guess, 'Caucasian' has done to a lot of people on the planet has been kinda weird and kinda odd and kinda fucked-up. You know, kinda devil*ish*. And 'devilish' means that this is against God's laws. It just has something to do with the ways, the mannerisms, of a particular personality. You as an individual, no.... You see, that's the thing I try to say in our music: Judge me by my character, not by my character*istics*."

Oh, well, I'm glad I'm not a serpent. That would really suck, y'know? "I got a problem with anybody that thinks their shit don't stink," Chuck says. "'Cause I ain't goin' around sayin' *my* shit don't stink. I ain't goin' around sayin' the black situation ain't our fault. It's also been caused by us in certain aspects. I'm just sayin', 'Yo—this is what we need to do.'"

He stops, straining to hear a muffled bass groove. "That's 'Rollin' With Kid 'n' Play,' right? Last fuckin' jam!" THWAP! goes the ball against the wall again. Flav's still missing. "Fuck Flav," say a couple of the humans rapidly cramming the room. "Yeah, right," Chuck counters. "I ain't playing without him. Them days is over." No more breakups. Chuck knows the brothers gonna work it out.

Publicists, roadies, and theater staff scurry behind the curtain like rats on the Titanic. "This can't be happening! Not in L.A.! Not in L.A.!" howls one. Someone suggests that Kid 'n' Play return for an extended encore. "That would be anticlimactic," offers a fatherly Kool Moe Dee. As the crowd rustles, *In Living Color*'s Tommy Robinson and another comic are sent out to improvise. From the lower bowels of the backstage complex, Flavor-Flav suddenly materializes among a jogging entourage. The brothers worked it out.



The devil wears sunscreen: from a black-Muslim magazine found in a Philadelphia subway.

They hit the stage amid chugging smoke machines and lightning strobes, dropping "Welcome to the Terrordome." It's a surprisingly tight show considering the level of pre-concert willies. "We gonna kick the ballistics under the realistics of all the motherfuckin' statistics tonight!" yells the cactus-throated Flav. "Come on, y'all, let's rock this motherfuckin' Greek-ass Theatre and shit!"

I have to be honest with you, dear reader, because I *love* you. *Care* about what you're doin'. I thought their debut, '87's *Yo! Bum Rush the Show,* was the best **LOUD** album of that entire sorry decade. Chuck's voice sounded like a butane lighter setting fire to the world order. Their more recent shit is industrial and tense enough, but it's forced and a bit clunky. Take it from paleface here—it's as undanceable as FM rock.

That's why I wandered around backstage swiping free sodas during the songs. But when the music stopped and Chuck began a monologue, the speakers crackled with that old '87 fire. His voice was reeling like a horse bucking against its master. "The power is with the people. Am I right or wrong?" ***RIGHT!*** answers the crowd. Chuck paces desperately. "Who the fuck is behind this shit? *We* don't bring guns into our motherfuckin' community. *We* don't bring drugs into the country. There's an iron force of the establishment that's responsible for it and shit, and *should* be held accountable." Even the trees seem to stand at attention. "Now—whenever they bring drugs in, guns in, give 'em to youngsters... *anything* could fuckin' happen! And it's happenin' right here in L.A.! 'Cause Hollywood is forever pumpin' that *bull*shit about our situation instead of us explainin' to our*selves* how we should live or how we been livin'." ***YEAH!*** "Rap music is viewed as being a threat. You know why? 'Cause for the first time, the black man, and a bunch of black sisters like Queen Latifah, is gettin' *our* point of view across.... That's why there's fear of a black planet. Everybody should share the planet. There shouldn't be any homeless people. It's a big motherfuckin' world. There shouldn't be people without food. It's a big motherfuckin' planet. The best things in life are free. And God gave it to everybody to share. But whenever the system goes against that principle, that means that principle and that system is based on a devilish mentality. That's all I'm gonna say." ***WHOO!*** Ex-N.W.A rapper Ice Cube, in a stunning black-hood/black-cap ensemble, joins Chuck and Flav for "Burn Hollywood Burn."



PHOTO BY GLEN E. FRIEDMAN

...Chuck D: early but surly

Riot police, about a hundred helmeted Caucasians with billy clubs, stand shoulder-to-shoulder outside the theater. There was no violence at tonight's concert, only raised fists and verbal belligerence. For now, the Hollywood cops seem content to leave the revolution onstage. ■

PIMPIN' THE DICTIONARY

ICEBERG SLIM: A CRIMINALLY GOOD WRITER

Iceberg Slim has been called "America's most-read black author" and "the greatest storyteller of the ghetto." He conjures up characters so real, you can whiff their intestines. His seven paperbacks have sold more than four million copies worldwide.

So how come you've never heard of him? Because he writes mainly about pimps and hoods, not exactly the stuff of PEN/Faulkner Awards. The *Washington Post* wrote that "He may have done for the pimp what Jean Genet did for the homosexual and thief: articulate the thoughts and feelings of someone who's been there."

Iceberg Slim was born Robert Beck in Chicago during World War I. As a teenager, he chose the street world over the straight world. He became a pimp and was busted right after his first hooker turned her second trick. His unflinching, emotionless demeanor earned him the 'Iceberg' tag: COLD. A parole officer once measured his IQ at 175. Beck perfected the pimpin' game in and out of the joint until he reached his forties. While serving an especially dismal stretch (see "... on Being in Prison," below), Robert Beck concluded he was too old to compete with the young cons.

He decided to keep his street name and pimp the dictionary instead. As a writer, he can be as eloquent as James Baldwin (but rougher):

> I want to say at the outset that I have become ill, insane as an inmate of a torture chamber behind America's fake facade of justice and democracy. But I am not as ill as I was, and I am getting better all the time. *(The Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim,* 1971*)*;

and as lyrical as LeRoi Jones (but with more heart):

> It was ten-thirty. The sky was a fresh, bright bitch. This first April night had gone sucker and gifted her with a shimmering bracelet of diamond stars. The fat moon lurked like an evil yellow eye staring down at the pimps, hustlers, and whores hawk-eyeing for a "mark," a "cop."
>
> I felt the raw tenderness of first April winds lashing at the hem of my white alligator. I felt the birth stirrings of that poisonous pimp's rapture. I felt powerful and beautiful. *(Pimp: The Story of My Life,* 1969.)

Iceberg Slim abandoned a life of crime, but he didn't disown the criminal milieu. He lives in South-Central L.A. on Crenshaw Boulevard, an unofficial dividing line between Crip and Blood gangs. In keeping with the pimp ethos, the 'Berg's as skilled a talker as he is a writer. He offered some street wisdom in a chat with *ANSWER Me!*:

ICEBERG SLIM ... on Growing up Poor

"Listen, man, I've led a hard life. I came from where if you weren't tough, you would expire just from the pressure.... In my own case, I went against my mother's expectations of me. She wanted me to be a lawyer. But when I was growing up—this is not a cop-out—but there were not that many opportunities for a young black person, you know? Even *with* an education. But anyway, the environment poisoned me, street-poisoned me at an early age. We lived in an area where all of the affluent people, obviously affluent people, were pimps. Black pimps. And they had these big—even in the midst of the Depression—they had these big, beautiful cars and these fabulously sexy broads, sometimes five and six with them. And some [pimps] had diamond insets in their teeth, and when they smiled the sun would catch them fuckin' diamond insets and all that gold—it was fashionable, you see? And the clothes—oh! And they were so perfectly barbered and just *smooth.* And this was quite an experience for me. And I'd see 'em every day—my mother had a beauty shop—and the men would come in and get their nails manicured, and I could see 'em at firsthand. And they seemed to be so glamorous and so worldly and so polished and sophisticated, you know? So this is what molded my thinking, and I wanted to be a pimp, for Christ's sake! I used to just *dream* about being a pimp and having all those sexy women givin' me money. Oh, my God!"

ICEBERG SLIM ... on Being in Prison

"I haven't had any brush with the police in the last three decades.... Let me tell you about the last bit I did. I had escaped from a prison one afternoon.... Nobody knew how I did it. It's in my book, *Pimp.* Now, the reason I escaped was 'cause it was a bad prison, OK? When I was apprehended thirteen years later—now we're coming to the dehumanizing part of it—they put me into a cell that was no more than, couldn't have been more than eight feet deep and no more than four feet wide, man, and kept me in there for a year. Like a steel box, man, a steel casket for a year, man. Get it? Now, sometimes the food, especially the breakfast food, would have worms in it. But guess who ate it? Because I knew at the time that worms were protein, but it took some doing.... Now, we know there's some mean coppers, right, in the street? Well, they got some mean cocksuckers in those joints, man. Oh, man! I mean, terrible, terrible people, man...."

ICEBERG SLIM ... on Wealth

"Affluent people are not as a rule held in jail, but for other people who are not so affluent, I mean, they serve it.... I don't think there's more than one white person from a wealthy background on death row anywhere in the country. They're all poor white people and blacks.... I don't think it's possible to send a truly wealthy person in this country to the execution chamber. I doubt it. Well, let's put it this way: It is highly improbable. [Laughs] Better cut ourselves some slack on that."

ICEBERG SLIM **. . . on Ronald Reagan**

"Our dear friend Reagan. He's the one who turned this flood tide of not caring, and he's responsible in my opinion for the reactivation of overt racism to the extent and degree that it now flourishes.... Reagan, from what I can understand, he was just a yes-man for powerful corporate interests.... The country really went backward, man! And you know for a fact, man, any rational person knows that there's no way that the so-called gang culture could have become what it is today, man, if just the minimal opportunity that existed prior to Reagan's administration had been enforced."

Listen, man, I've led a hard life. I came from where if you weren't tough, you would expire just from the pressure.

ICEBERG SLIM **. . . on Moral Morons**

"I think in this country they look down, the people who criticize and don't seem to want to understand crime and why, I think they just feel that they're superior and the people who commit crimes are so *in*ferior that they're not worth doing anything for except incarcerating and killing in the death chambers across the nation.... If they *do* feel that these people are human, they don't feel they're the same kind of human being that they are. In other words, just a different brand, if you will. And then, oddly enough, some of them are Christians, so-called Christians. Now, this is the unkindest cut of all—a Christian racist, man, believe me, that is one dirty son-of-a-bitch."

ICEBERG SLIM **. . . on Prison Overcrowding**

"I think that there is a very callous attitude, especially toward black do-wrongers. I think that there is a lot of warehousing being done and no effort anymore at rehabilitation. I mean, that's for sure....I made a statement that wasn't received so wonderfully well. I made a lecture tour when I was well enough to go on the college circuit. I think it was in a white college, I've forgotten where, somewhere in Illinois, and I cracked that since there was a total lack of compassion and a need to try to understand the so-called criminal, I said that I thought that it should be mandatory that all young men should be conscripted, just like they do for the army, and be forced to serve a year in the penitentiary. And that got it. Oh, boy!... More criminals are being created where they're needed, and they'll fill up as many [prisons] as they can build. All of the negative processes that are creating the high-level criminality that exists now are still in operation, because they will not touch or attempt to do anything about it."

ICEBERG SLIM **. . . on Racism**

"This is from experience and from having lived a long time: Categorically in America, it's much worse for a black person, I mean, especially a male. The black male population has been decimated, practically and spiritually. That's why there's so many fatherless families, among other reasons, but that's why. And I hate to say this, and don't take this as being self-hatred necessarily, it's just a statement of fact: It's almost like when you're born black, you're born with such a disadvantage. Which is not to say that certain intrepid black individuals don't rise beyond all their handicaps... but the truth is, I feel so triumphant that at seventy-two that I've survived, 'cause I've got news for you, rhetorically: If a nigger, if a male nigger is able to survive in this society to be almost seventy-two, friend, he has accomplished one hell of a miracle. Believe me. Be*lieve* me....

I've got news for you, rhetorically: If a nigger, if a male nigger is able to survive in this society to be almost seventy-two, friend, he has accomplished one hell of a miracle.

"No place in a so-called hallowed area like Beverly Hills, for instance, is safe at night for a black male. If you want to commit suicide, like I was joking, telling a young man, he was crackin', you know, about, 'Oh, life is, man...' I said, 'Look—you wanna commit suicide?' He said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'Go to Beverly Hills tonight and sit around one o'clock. Just go there and walk. Just walk three blocks and then run. When you see the police, and when they pull toward you or ask you to come to the car or whatever, run. That's all you gotta do. It's easy.'" ■

For more information about Iceberg Slim, write to Holloway House, the self-described "World's Largest Publisher of Black Experience Paperback Books," 8060 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

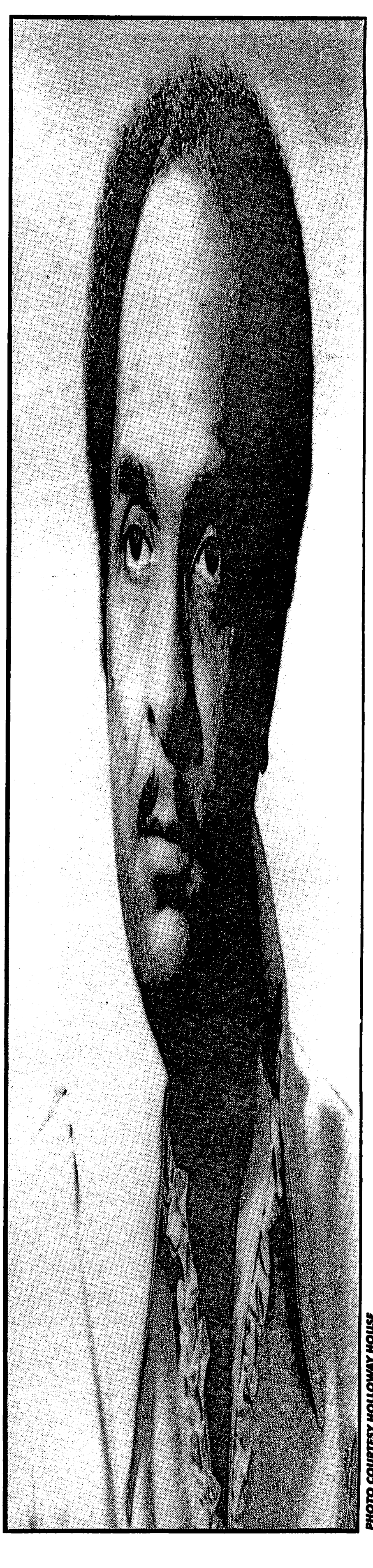


PHOTO COURTESY HOLLOWAY HOUSE

BABIES ARE DIRTY

Babies Are Dirty. Babies Are Disgusting.

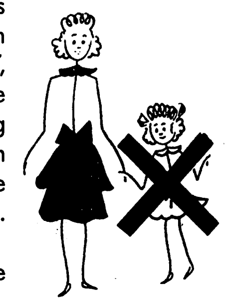
I hate babies. I hate when people ask me if I have children. When I hear someone say the word 'baby,' I cringe. When I see a newborn, I feel nauseous. Pregnant women are ugly. The words 'baby,' 'child,' and 'toddler' are dirty words. They don't exist in my vocabulary. I've coined a synonym with which I feel comfortable: **CREATURE**. (The author shall refer to children as 'creatures' throughout this piece.)

Mothers hold their creatures as if it's their **TROPHY**. They smile like I should approve. I **DON'T**. These women are so proud. Some**THING** came out of them. The creature stares blankly into space.

Don't be smug. Giving birth is no accomplishment. You've spread your legs; the wad's been shot. The 'moms' (another disgusting word) that I know don't want a full-time job in the work force. According to census listings, most mothers **ONLY** have a high-school diploma.[1] Among women who haven't finished high school, 73% choose to get pregnant.[2] Writing samples reveal that they are illiterate. I'm here to educate you.

A pregnant female **DOES** look like she's **SWALLOWED A WATERMELON.** Breast-feeding's even worse. It's just so **UNNATURAL!**

I never wanted a Cabbage Patch doll. I never had the urge, the craving, the burning desire to be a mother. As a youngster playing with Barbie and Ken **DOLLS**, I created **ROMANTIC**, not **FAMILY**, situations. I never imagined Barbie "in the family way." I dreamed of my knight in shining armor. We'd live happily ever after. My dream came true. We are lovers, not **BREEDERS**. We are best friends, not somebody's parents. Creatures are **NOT INCLUDED.**



There is no **TRUTH** to the concept of the "biological **CLOCK**." I'm a thirty-seven-year-old happily married woman. I have no **CLOCK** ticking inside me. The biological **CLOCK** is a myth created by society in order to keep the labor cheap and the money circulating. Professionals push the myth. Doctors are surprised when I tell them that I don't want offspring. They say, "You'll change your mind when you turn forty." It sucks that people are shocked, that something so **TRIVIAL** is considered out-of-the-norm.

By age forty-five, **ONLY ONE** out of **TEN** married women is **CREATURELESS.**[3] The average person **THINKS** it's normal to get hitched and have creatures. This labels you a grown-up. Majority opinion dictates that it's the natural order of things and a quick way to fill the family photo album. AIDS scared singles into settling down and squeezing them out. Girlfriends bear creatures around the same time as each other, comparing notes. It's **TRENDY**.

Later they **BLEND IN** with friends and relatives. Creatures bring people **TOGETHER**. No more **PEER PRESSURE**. Creatures are brought to office parties. Secretaries fawn over them. Isn't it cute? **NO!** Kittens and puppies are cute. And quieter and cleaner.

Watch the way that adults **TALK** to a creature. They're **RELIVING THEIR CHILDHOODS**. Goo goo, ga ga. Talk like this soothes people. All's right with the world. But **NOT** everybody loves creatures.

Yes, a heterosexual woman **CAN** actually think these **THINGS** are dirty, ugly, disgusting **CRETINS**. A newborn is the **MOST** unsettling sight you could put before me. It's a miniature monster equipped with wrinkled skin, scrunched-up features, and a foul, detergent smell. I'd **NEVER**, ever touch one. Support its head? I'd gladly drop it and walk away.

GET IT AWAY FROM ME!!!

I won't hold it. I pretend that it does not exist. "You've got to have at least *one*," a co-worker once instructed me. My reality doesn't include it. I'm pleased to say that my womb is **BARREN**. By the way I act, I make mothers feel like they did something wrong. But they **DID** something wrong. They had a creature. And they have become **BORING** as shit!

I'm pleased to say that my womb is BARREN. By the way I act, I make mothers feel like they did something wrong.

I don't respect **FATHERS**, either. The idea of a man wearing a papoose or pushing a creature carriage is **NOT** flattering. Such men are effeminate and worse than mothers. 'Daddy' supports not only **IT**, but a stupid wife who stays at home. What **SUCKERS!**

BOREDOM in marriage leads to the creation of creatures. The people I know who have creatures are **NOT** happy. The husband and wife focus on their neutral **THIRD** party. They hide their feelings and put up a happy front for the creature's sake. The **ROMANCE IS GONE**, and they channel their thoughts, their conversation, their time, their **BEING** toward the new being. The creature's the only **THING** keeping the marriage together.

People talk about the "joys of childbirth." Don't they realize that childbirth has **KILLED** women? Half a million females in the world die from pregnancy-related causes each year.[4]

What's worse, you can't walk around your apartment nude if you have a creature. You're a prisoner taking care of it. You've got to shell out **LOTS** of bucks to have it tended to. The cost of raising it from birth to age eighteen is at least a hundred thousand dollars.[5] You have to instill morals into it. You have to clean its shit, feed it, clothe it, bathe it, brush its hair, take it to the doctor and dentist, enroll it in school, buy it toys, and make sure it gets home on time. I have **ENOUGH** chores. I don't need **EXTRA** laundry. I have no desire to have my sleep interrupted by the sound of a crying creature. I refuse to hear the "patter of little feet." Creatures **AGE** you. Creatures **STRANGLE** mental freedom. Creatures **CHAIN** you to your home. I like to relax, massage my feet, and hear myself think. I didn't go to college to change diapers. Without creatures, I can **TRAVEL** a lot. Creature-free, I have **LESS** luggage.

But the airport's crowded with people, all owning lots of creatures. Why do they do it? It's not a "maternal instinct." Many people want a **MINIATURE VERSION OF THEMSELVES**. It's an **EGO TRIP**. They think Junior will be cute. They have an heir. A part of them is here for posterity. The family name lives on. Their stuff won't go to the state when they die.

Eleven-and-a-half thousand creatures are hatched every day in the United States.[6] A new creature opens its eyes every seven seconds in this country. TV commercials tell you to recycle trash and not to smoke cigarettes, but you won't see **OVERPOPULATION** warnings. My blood pressure drops when less people are around. But there are creatures everywhere and plenty more on the way. Women who can't afford them get **KNOCKED UP** and call it an **"ACCIDENT."** The **TAXPAYERS'** money buys them oatmeal and diapers. Having creatures is a **FAD** which is not going out of style. Aren't the freeways **CROWDED** enough? Abortion should not only be free, it should be **MANDATORY**.



You have to clean its shit, feed it, clothe it, bathe it, brush its hair, take it to the doctor and dentist, enroll it in school, buy it toys, and make sure it gets home on time. I have ENOUGH chores.

There's **NOTHING CREATIVE** about procreation, girls. Relish your menstrual cycle. Around my house, my period is cause for celebration. Used **TAMPONS** can decorate Christmas trees or be worn as earrings—such a cheaper fashion accessory than a creature. Parenting **WON'T** make you an individual. Remember my **ANTI**-creature feature the next time you hear one **SCREAMING**. Pregnancy is **THE AMERICAN NIGHTMARE.** ■

FOOTNOTES . . . 1,2: *Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.* ***3,5:*** *Office of Population Research, Princeton University.* ***4:*** Calypso Log *(A publication of the Cousteau Society), 2/91.* ***6:*** *National Center for Health Statistics (Statistics Resource Branch), Washington, D.C.*

PHOTOS . . . Far Left and Above: *Screaming baby and frustrated father from Vigeland Sculpture Park, Oslo, Norway.* ***Left:*** *"Used TAMPONS can decorate Christmas trees. . . ."*

PEOPLE RUIN

Let me share my hatred with you. I can't change human beings, but I can criticize them, and that's what I'm gonna do. There's a sucker born every minute. Start sucking.

Jean-Paul Sartre aptly said, "Hell is other people." People bring my head down. People bug me. People waste my time. People upset. People insult. People intrude. People aggravate. People complicate. People interfere. People fuck up. People suck!

I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them.

THEY OFFEND MY FIVE SENSES

People **SMELL.** They stink. Their offensive vapors disgust me. Women smell of salmonlike vaginal odors. Men smell like moldy salami. People douse themselves with perfumes and colognes to camouflage their B.O. This intensifies the stench. Why do you think they call it "toilet water?" I hold my nose as the bastards walk by. I'd like to throw their perfumes into a garbage disposal, along with the rest of them. Their fluids repel me. When they belch and fart in public, they demonstrate what slobs they really are. They'd better not spit, cough, or sneeze on me. I have no desire to choke on their germs.

TASTE: People have none.

SIGHT: I once read that a person's vision weakens if they don't like what they're seeing. My eyesight has progressively worsened in the last year. My heartbeat races when I see their ugly mugs. People look ugly because they're filled with ugly thoughts. It doesn't matter if they're rich or poor. They're the same everywhere. They're semen which wasn't swallowed or wiped off with a tissue and chucked in the trash.

TOUCH: Don't come close and don't touch me. "Touchy" people take it upon themselves to eye me up and down, get close, and try to touch. How dare they! They don't know me. I have nothing in common with them, and I don't want to be their friend. They could never take enough showers to clean off all their dirt. No contact, or *else.*

HEARING: People should keep their mouths shut. Their voices disturb my peace. Their sounds upset me. People make unnecessary noise. Diarrhea constantly spurts out of their mouths. They seldom get to the meat of matters. They discuss boring topics like the weather, politics, their jobs, health, food, weddings, and flowers. They hardly ever say what they're really thinking. They're empty-headed. They hear what they want to hear.

So you learn to tell them what they need to hear. It's a script. When you meet someone, they know nothing about you. You can convince them that you're anybody—a faith healer, a serial killer, or both. They don't understand, anyway. They're too busy being wrapped up in their dull lives. People like to talk about themselves. With annoying faces and tired expressions, they stare at me. This pisses me off. Why can't they read the newspaper, go to the library, or do something? Don't look at me. I'm not here to entertain. I don't have answers to your problems.

People are careless. People care less. They lack integrity. They're inconsiderate lowlifes. They're disorganized. They're in a fog. Their minds are muddled. So they pick up the phone



EVERYTHING

and call me. I won't answer or open my door to them. They can keep knocking until their knuckles are raw.

When I'm alone, my creativity has a chance to develop. When other people enter the picture, all hope is lost. They're experts at stifling originality. When groups gather, individuality flies out the window.

But people hate to be alone. People are afraid of disapproval from others, so they clique together like a lounge lizard's fingers. They leave their personal hells behind on a mad search for fun. Like vampires, they suck identity from others, because alone, their lives have no meaning. They mingle with their own kind. They cluster around their TV sets with family. They believe everything they see on television. Their kinship makes them feel secure. *ANSWER Me!* says, "Fuck the family!" We don't need relatives to affirm our reality.

KINDS OF PEOPLE

We don't talk to our own kind. I'm white, but I don't have much in common with most Caucasians. They're boring, weak, narrow-minded, and uptight. Black people, though, usually have a good sense of humor. They've had to handle shit from rednecks all their lives. Rednecks are insecure assholes, needing a scapegoat on which to pin their deficiencies. On second thought, so are black supremacists.

White trash are OK unless they have children. Being animals, they almost always do. White trash congregate at trailer parks and speedways. They play Lotto, hoping for overnight millions. Too dim to see the odds are stacked against them, they remain poor.

Yuppies are whitebread imbeciles who are enslaved to status. They want everyone to notice them. They're loud, self-assured cowards. Hippies are better than yuppies, but they're in a time warp, too. They're also annoyingly, unrealistically positive.

Hikers are healthy but ugly. Skinheads are rebellious conformists. Metalheads should get a haircut. No guy is supposed to have hair longer than mine. And dude, if you think you're cool, you make me yawn. I'll strangle you with your silk scarf, you makeup-wearing pussy.

THE SOLUTION

Die, you bastards! Die! But people are everywhere. Even when I'm on vacation, I can't escape them. Their noises seep through hotel walls and ceilings. It takes time and effort just to find a spot far enough away. If I stop to ponder a spectacular natural sight, suddenly, I'm not alone. Cars pull over and their occupants think, "Oh, someone else stopped. It's got to be good!" Every car carries a potential murderer, a destroyer of dreams.

Sunsets, mountains, architecture, ***anything*** looks better without people showing up and ruining it. It's been a rough day of sightseeing. I think I'll drop into the hotel's Jacuzzi and soak away all my pain. The hot bubbles soothe me. I finally feel calm. But wait. What's this? A group of people barge in. They ask stupid questions like, "How's the water?" It's wet, asshole! I immediately leave. I'm not calm anymore.

So I stay in. I call it 'entombment.' I hate socializing. I hate parties. People gather together and size each other up. With cocktails in hand, they have the same conversations over and over. They laugh at stupid jokes, finding the










dumbest things funny. Who the fuck needs it?

Their lives can be destroyed tomorrow. Sensing this, they put on a happy face to mask any insecurities. They project a phony front of goodwill and cheer. Ever have a person open up to you? That's when the bland, miserable details of their fragile, pathetic lives pour out.

I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them. I hate them.

People sound stupid. People look stupid. People *are* stupid. The majority of people can't spell or read complex words. According to the National Literacy Hotline, one out of five American adults is functionally illiterate. Their kids are even dumber! People are programmed idiots. They go to their jobs, go home, have a few beers or martinis, and then suck for a few hours on cable TV's giant nipple. They like rules, regulations, and etiquette. *ANSWER Me!* says, "Fuck rules and regulations! Fuck manners!" In restaurants, people share meaningless conversations over bean dip and cheese sticks. They never cut through the baloney.

People will sell out if the stakes are right. Put cash in front of them. They smile, then grab it. People are dishonest. What do they want? What they can get away with. Just get them away from me.

People act upon their immediate, distorted impulses without thinking. Violence pacifies them. They overpower their victims like a pack of wild dogs. Like a swarm of bees they attack. Fights arise from stupid conversations and silly misunderstandings until someone gets hurt. If a person thinks or looks different, people condemn by reflex. Fuck that! I root for the underdog in all situations. The majority's wrong. That's why it's the majority.

It's not a crowd. It's a sea of overgrown spermatozoa. People can't discuss their problems with each other. It takes too much effort for them to simply be sincere, so resentment grows. Problems don't get resolved. People get older and dumber.

To mask their stupidity, people join together in a pretentious feeling of unity. Look at some of the trends they follow: "Baby on Board" stickers, stuffed animals attached with suction cups to car windows, surf pants, and recycling. It's unnecessary bullshit, but it makes them feel cozy. They don't question. They quietly accept. They blindly go along with whatever their peers are doing, just like the Manson family. All are as one.

Ever have a person open up to you? That's when the bland, miserable details of their fragile, pathetic lives pour out.

Except this one. I only go out of my apartment for research and food. I disagree with people. If someone says up, I'll say down. People are usually wrong, and even if they're right, I won't believe them. I'll double-check what they tell me. I won't trust their judgment.













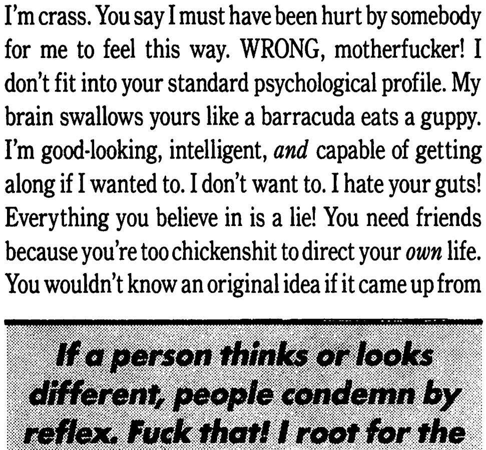

They fuck up. They're always fucked up. There's nothing to them. They're not interesting. They lack mystery. I can't learn from them. They'll only depress me. I realize that I'm better off doing my own thing. I benefit from not being involved in their banal conversations. So I avoid talking to people. It's an inside joke. I know how cool I am. They lack the insight to ever, ever know. I won't sell out and play along with their lame games. I walk down the street, hoping it's empty.

Along comes someone to bust my balloon. I'm minding my own business, and they pick a fight with me. They stare at me rudely or make some horny comment. The rule is that you shouldn't yell in public. Adults aren't supposed to reveal emotion. But I'm not like everybody else. I make a scene. Everybody turns and stares. I tell my latest enemy, "Find another fool to fuck with," and give them the finger. You can't be overtly physical, 'cause then you'll get arrested. But you can threaten them with harsh words such as, "I have a gun. I'll shoot you. I have a knife. I'll stab you." Even if you *don't* have a weapon, they tense up. They seem to understand these words rather quickly. The person who was goading me leaves. It didn't take much to rile me—just a dirty look.

People will never get it. I'm left to kick furniture, hit pillows, smash plates, and write articles like this, rather than go out of my comfortable apartment, see them, grimace, and get mad enough to kick them in the crotch or spit in their ugly faces. They're *all* feces.

YOU'RE A PERSON, TOO

And *you*! You're no better than the rest of them. You suck, too! You accuse me of being rude. You say I'm crass. You say I must have been hurt by somebody for me to feel this way. WRONG, motherfucker! I don't fit into your standard psychological profile. My brain swallows yours like a barracuda eats a guppy. I'm good-looking, intelligent, *and* capable of getting along if I wanted to. I don't want to. I hate your guts! Everything you believe in is a lie! You need friends because you're too chickenshit to direct your *own* life. You wouldn't know an original idea if it came up from behind and buttfucked you. Go home and cry before I launch a missile on your ass!



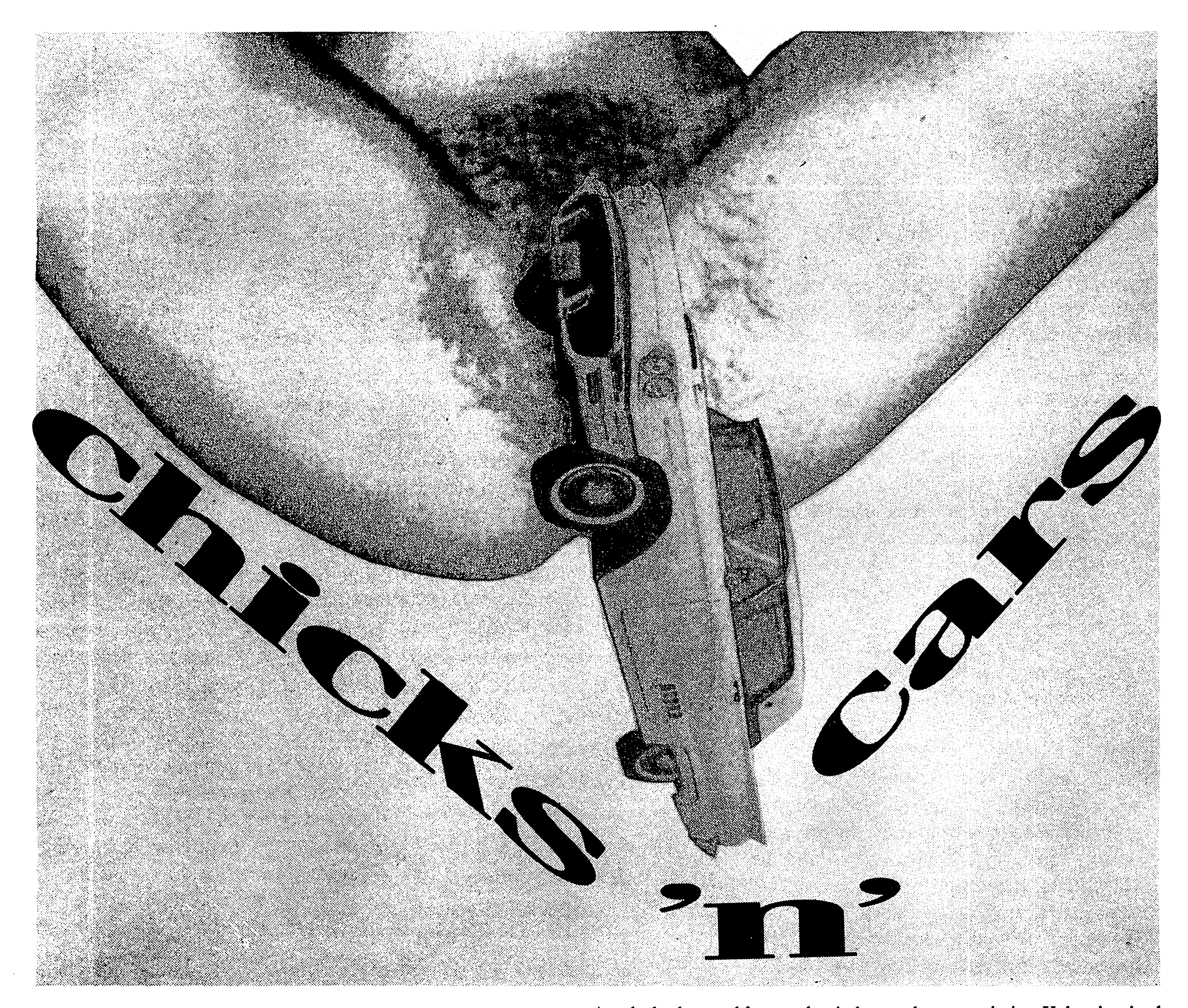
I have the power of the written word on my side. I aim my anger at YOU in this column. You're reading this! You'll probably misunderstand most of what I've said. You look away. You can't comprehend. It goes over your head. It's a downer. Guess what? Seventy years from now, maggots will be eating out your eye sockets. How's *that* for a downer? Too fucking bad. See, you're here now. Once again, you've ruined everything. ■









chicks 'n' cars

by donna gaines

I always liked having a car that I could live in if I had to, a mobile home for a person with a bad temper. A place to go when you have to have the last word. Cars were made for eating, sleeping, sex, escape, storage, and bad, hard driving.

My first car was a '65 Olds. Cheryl was a pale, iridescent-green, four-door sedan. The original heavy-metal slut. With a non-functional muffler and an AM radio blasting along Cross Bay Boulevard in Queens, this car was my first love.

Then came Lisa. A prissy, baby-blue 1964 F85 Oldsmobile with a shy, silent motor. I took good care of my cars, but in the end they both got banged to shit. Cheryl drove me deep into engine theory. Every time Lisa got her ass kicked, I set up a body shop in my apartment complex's parking lot. Over time, the essence of my cars was revealed in the stench of rotted floorboards. I kept both of my ladies 'til the bitter end.

Then I went hetero. The Mong was a real dick. A 1978 white Mercury Monarch with a forest-green interior and matching vinyl roof. Sort of like the horny, glitzy, overbearing everyman you'd meet at some singles' weekend. Not my idea of a hot trick, but the price was right. At first I thought The Mong was a total dork—an old man's car! But the V-8 engine never let me down. For kicks I'd slow up and accelerate spasmodically. This makes passengers ill, fucks up the vacuum advance, the brakes, and forget what it does to the transmission. Unless it rained the night before, I'd refer to The Mong as The Filth Beast.

But everyone loved The Mong—I had a shrine to the Ramones on the dashboard, my ex-boyfriend's Teamster buttons were pinned to the sun visor, and velveteen parrots from Rockaway Beach's Playland swung from the rearview mirror. I had a tire iron under the seat, a gift from my dad. Over the years I'd affixed state-pride stickers from my travels to Indiana, Kentucky, and Florida. There was a statue of St. Christopher on the dashboard, since he wasn't a saint anymore. Through no fault of mine, The Mong's body was hit on four sides and was rusting out. It was hopeless to fix, since it had such bad karma. So I got real good at pasting up the fiberglass body with electrical tape and more regional regalia.

But The Mong was doomed. After I sold it to some guy I met at Radio Shack, he quickly abandoned it at Long Island's Bethpage State Park.

My new car. The first time I saw it, it looked like a turtle the color of period blood. A Japanese toy spy car. I'd been in love before—first with a turquoise 1966 mint Mustang I saw in Oakland, and then there was that assertive black Trans Am, raised in the rear, that tried to bunghole Lisa's gas tank on the Meadowbrook Parkway. But this car changed my life.

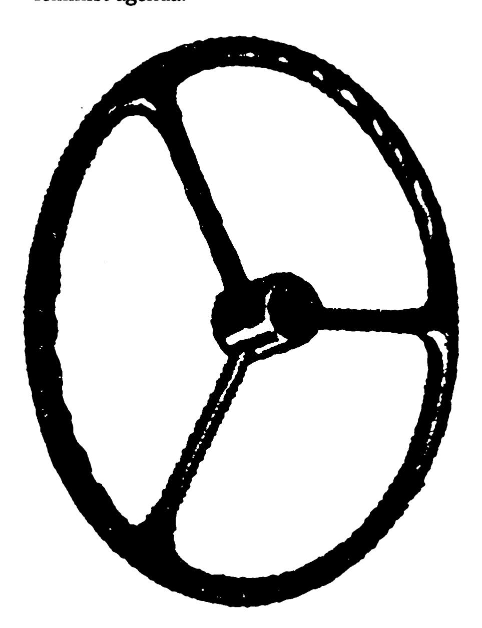
Now, in the morphology of car ownership, most people would take me for a Camaro driver. The Camaro is a ruling car of Long Island, even though everyone admits it's a piece of shit. Some people fetish cars for image, others want value—good resale or sublime craftsmanship. The

Camaro is an image car.

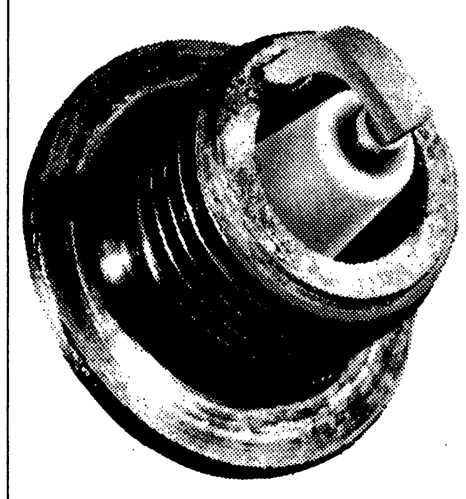
All my friends had me figured for a Camaro, the sister to the Trans Am. So when I showed up with my new babe, a Honda Accord, they really thought I'd lost it. A 1986 maroon LX four-door sedan with electric locks and windows, it had plum-colored velour bucket seats. Everyone conceded, "Hondas are good cars," but they couldn't imagine me in an Accord. It just didn't fit my image. Was it all the years of deprivation and self-effacement? Was I "going YUP?" Some of my friends were pissed that I didn't "buy American." I felt bad about that myself and rationalized about the futility of boycott given the multinationals, monopoly capitalism, etc., etc. Desperately I'd whimper, "Well, the Accords are actually made in this country."

My new car. The first time I saw it, it looked like a turtle the color of period blood. A Japanese toy spy car.

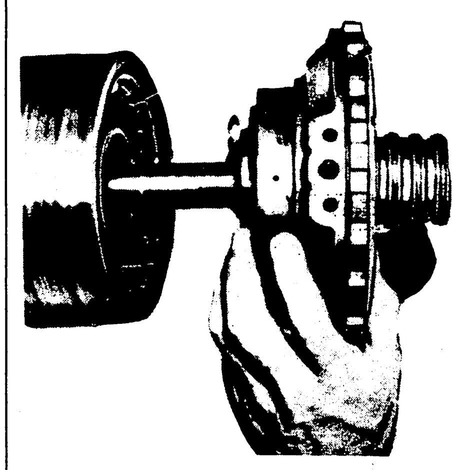
But I had my reasons, and they had nothing to do with the relationship between Hondas and Lou Reed or with the role of Hondas in the surf music of my youth. I explained that behind this particular veil of commodity aesthetics was a feminist agenda.



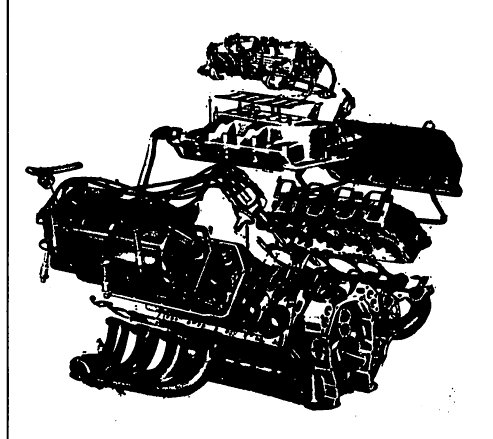
Three of my women friends had bought Hondas recently. Judy told me they were "reliable, safe cars of good value." She carried on for months. "I love my car," she would croon. Jean, who was on her second Honda, mailed me the latest *Consumer Reports* ratings. She recommended dealers. Gail pushed for the LX, which afforded the driver a Star Trek control panel, complete control of door locks, windows, radio antenna, trunk hood, and gas flap. The Sisterhood of Honda argued that this would give me total power. I'd be queen and ruler of my car's life-world. They delved deeper into feminist issues: The car would never break down on a dark, deserted highway where the oppressor might be lurking in the shadows waiting to rob and rape me. Never again in freezing winter would I have to futz with the carburetor or go begging for a jump. It was a good long-term investment. The car would stay loyal—it kept its value. Finally, I was convinced.



For the first three months after I got the car, I was so intimidated, I wouldn't drive it anywhere. I took taxis, trains, and hustled rides. No one was allowed to smoke in it. Only certain foods were nervously permitted. On one occasion I got really annoyed about all the new sobriety shit. In an act of defiance I guzzled some wine, but it was a nice Cabernet Sauvignon, not the rotgut Gypsy Rose of my younger years with Cheryl. I covered the seats with towels. I even cruised Auto Barn for slipcovers. No sex with guys (fluids).



I got so anal about my car that my friends started treating me like I was going off. I had never acted like this before, so they tried to be understanding. Eventually we just went out in *their* cars. Who has the patience to sit around watching some lunatic park and re-park her car eighty-six times before stopping at the deli to



buy cigarettes that she won't let you smoke anyway? Every thirty seconds checking the oil and vacuuming with the Dustbuster purchased for this very purpose. Endless fiddling with the radio. Polishing, waxing, and brushing off your seat. Forty-six phone calls to the dealer, the service garage, and to Frank, who runs a tranny shop, to inquire about the gears.

Finally, some compassionate soul slightly dented the right side. The next week brought another inconsequential nick on the left. Now the car has a little garbage festering on the floor. Traces of peanut shells and other unidentified raunch are embedded in the seats. Neon dinosaurs and lizards roam the dash. I named my car the A-Core (anarchy 'A' hardcore symbol), because it's small, tight, fast, and straight-edged.

Anybody who's too clean has no mind, and that especially applies to four-cylinder engines.

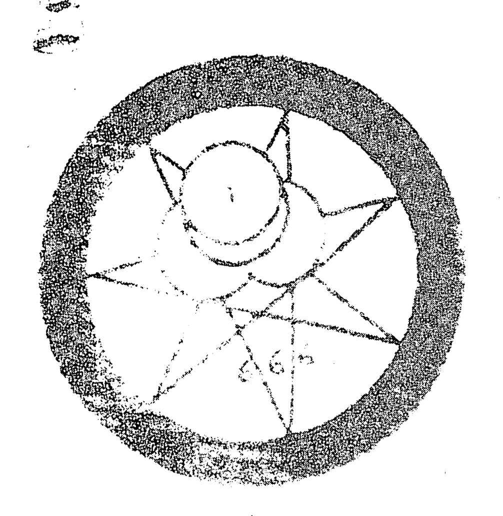
The other day I was driving down the Meadowbrook Parkway, and I said to the A-Core, "You know, anybody who's too clean has no mind, and that especially applies to four-cylinder engines." And we rode off headbanging into the dirty sunset. ■

Donna Gaines is the author of Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead End Kids, *which* Rolling Stone *cited as "probably the best book written about contemporary youth culture." She introduced the* ANSWER Me! *editors to each other, so we're indebted for life. Donna lives in New York, out on Lawn Guyland, but we still like her. By the way, no, it's not her pussy.*

Got My Mojo Penis Workin'



By Frank Beehler



Many people are basically stupid. It never ceases to amaze me that they are not only eager to avoid taking responsibility for their lives, they're compulsively willing to place their faith in idiotic belief systems which enable them to avoid facing the biggest cop-out of all—they don't possess the character or courage to reach their own decisions. Instead, they let someone or something else do it for them.

One of the world's many pathetic belief systems is the occult, which, I suppose, could also embrace the catchphrases "New Age," "paranormal psychology," etc. All of these systems offer myriad ways in which people may foist off life's problems and responsibilities onto some "higher power" when they usually have very little proof of either its existence or effectiveness.

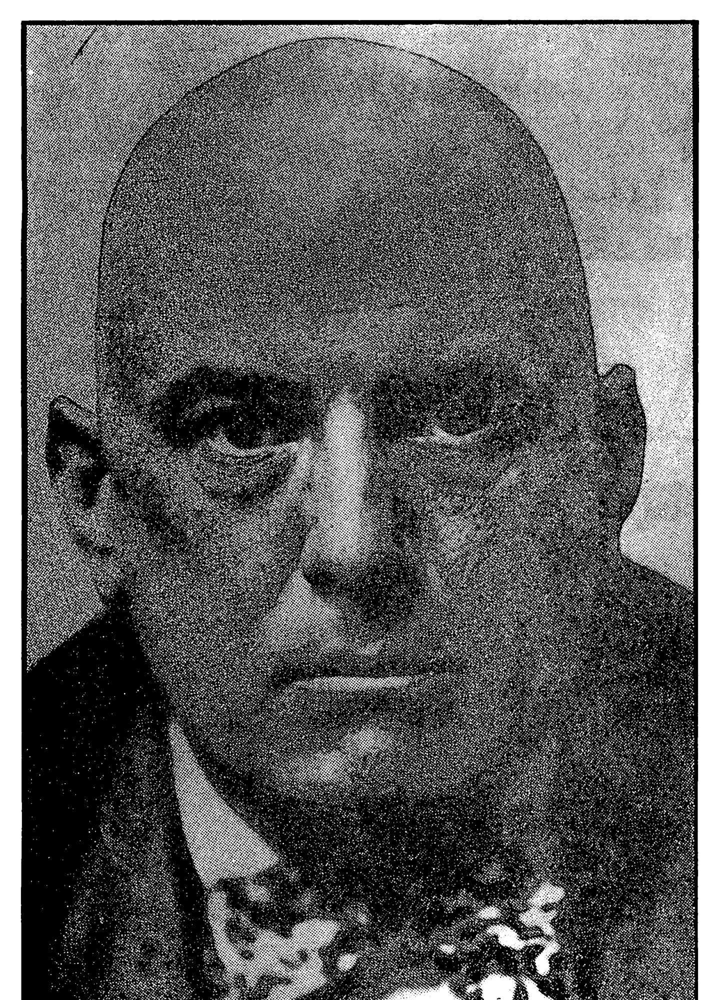
For the price of a stamp, I recently received a large box filled with three different occult catalogs containing such fascinating items as penis-shaped candles. The wax schlongs appear in photos to be somewhat smaller than the average male phallus, and they come in several different colors according to their purpose.

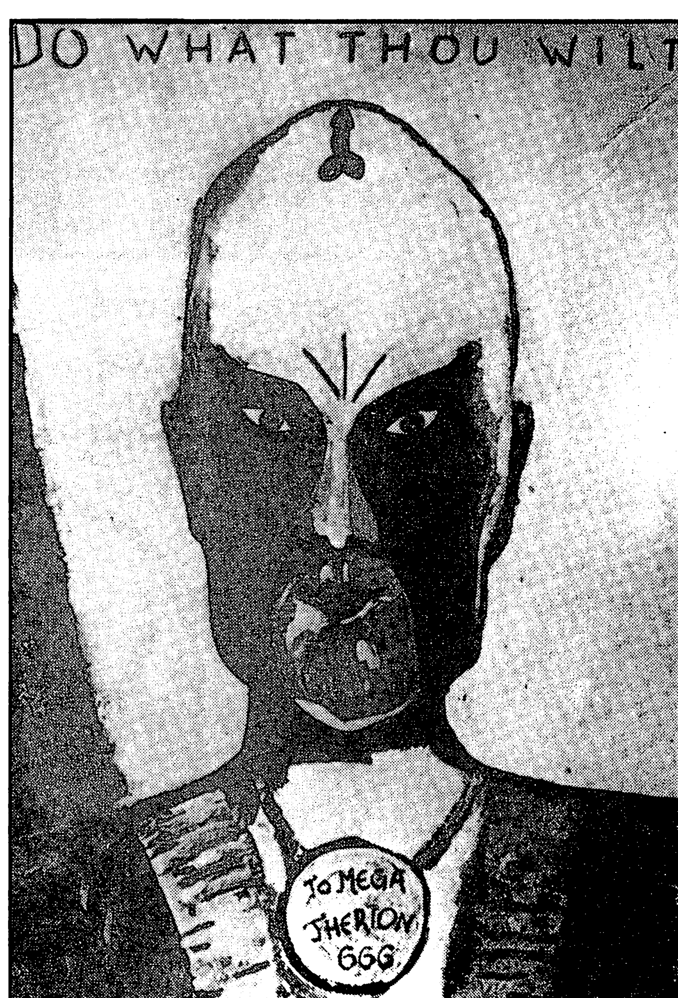
Under the heading "Mojo Your Man," one ad describes how to keep a man from "playing around": Use a blue penis candle, along with citronella and African juju oils, combined with appropriate incantation. For the romantic, it gives instructions on how to keep him "turned on": Write your desire on a red penis candle, then stroke the candle nine times with "happiness oil" and say, "penis so hard, be good to me, let my man enjoy our sex," etc.

What kind of numbskull would buy penis-shaped candles and assorted oils (which probably smell like a sewer) in lieu of some more sensible means of addressing the concerns of infidelity or impotence? What do these people deem worthy of discussion? Probably nothing as "embarrassing" as sex—penis candles to the rescue! For some, it's easier to invoke talismans than to risk exposing their rickety credentials for membership in the human race to others or themselves.

Of course, sexual problems aren't the only matters we can avoid by using the occult. Another ad I came across trumpeted the virtues of the "money ring," which, for the bargain price of $19.95, is said to attract money to all those who wear it. This must be more appealing than employing a modicum of intelligence and/or work to make a buck. I imagine some oily character reading his own ad copy in a cramped office somewhere saying to himself, "If I can just move another ten cases of money rings by next month, I can afford another sleazy weekend of drunken euphoria with that gap-toothed blonde escort." At least he's making a decision.

You need not limit yourself to doing business by mail. In almost any area of L.A., one can find tarot readers, palm readers, psychic advisors, and astrologers who will, in exchange for various sums of money, let you manipulate the Fates as your heart desires. Or you can hit the local bookstore and buy just about any type of self-help literature you can imagine. It seems that all you really gain from this bullshit is nothing more than someone else's idea of what you "need." They don't even know who you are, and if you buy into their demographic, you probably don't know who the hell you are, either.





The infamous British Satanist Aleister Crowley, in a psychotic stupor (left) and as drawn by his own hand (right, including penis-shaped hairdo). Was he evil incarnate, or just a hurt little boy afraid to grow up?

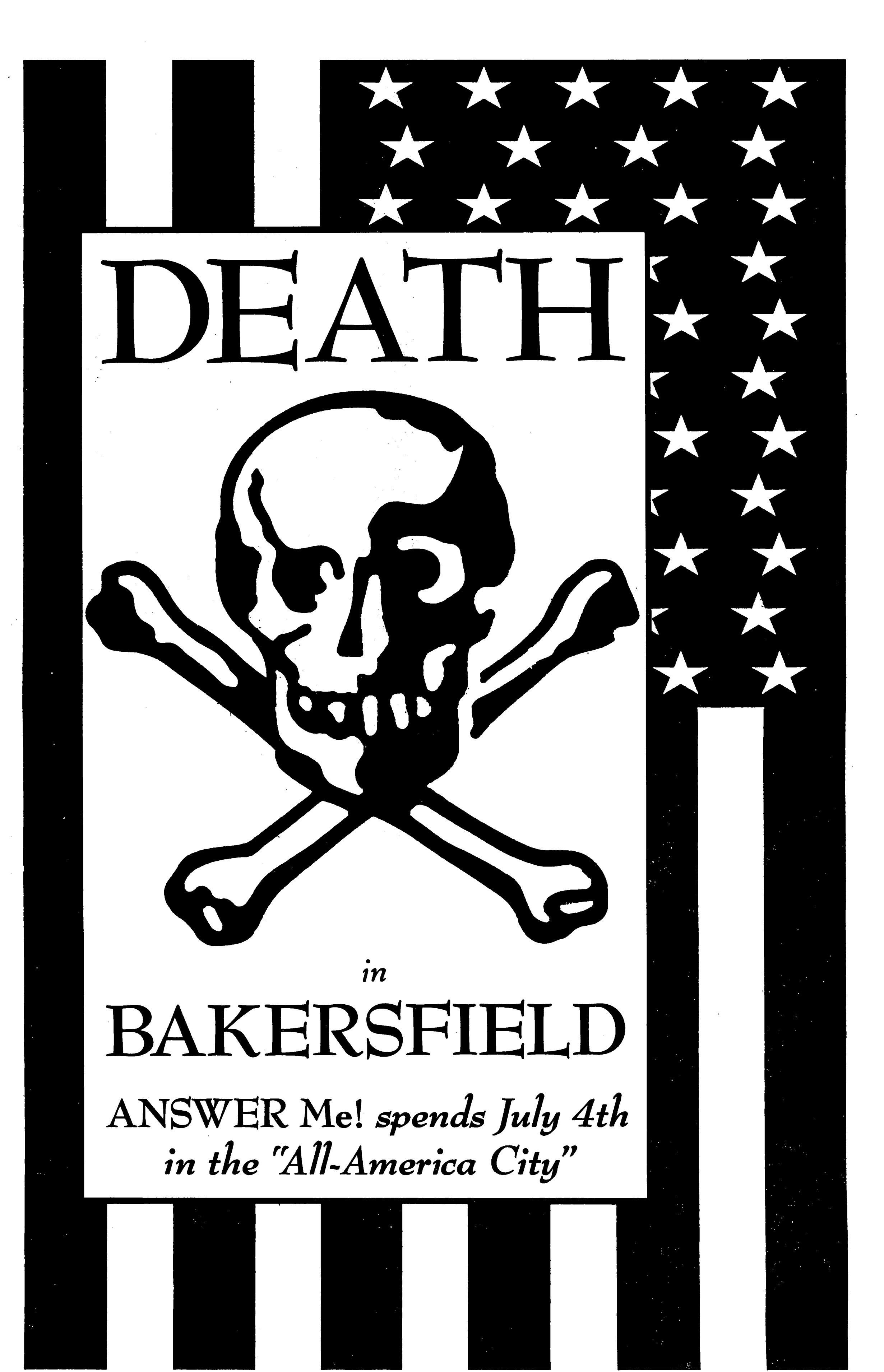
Some of this shit can be downright dangerous, too. I give you the phenomenon of quartz crystals, which are especially popular here in Southern California. They are said to have, among other uses, various healing capacities. Perhaps you are suffering from a recurrent headache—one book instructs you to lie down and place your "personal" crystal on your forehead and imagine a "soothing blue beam of light flowing through your head, purifying, clarifying, washing the pain away."

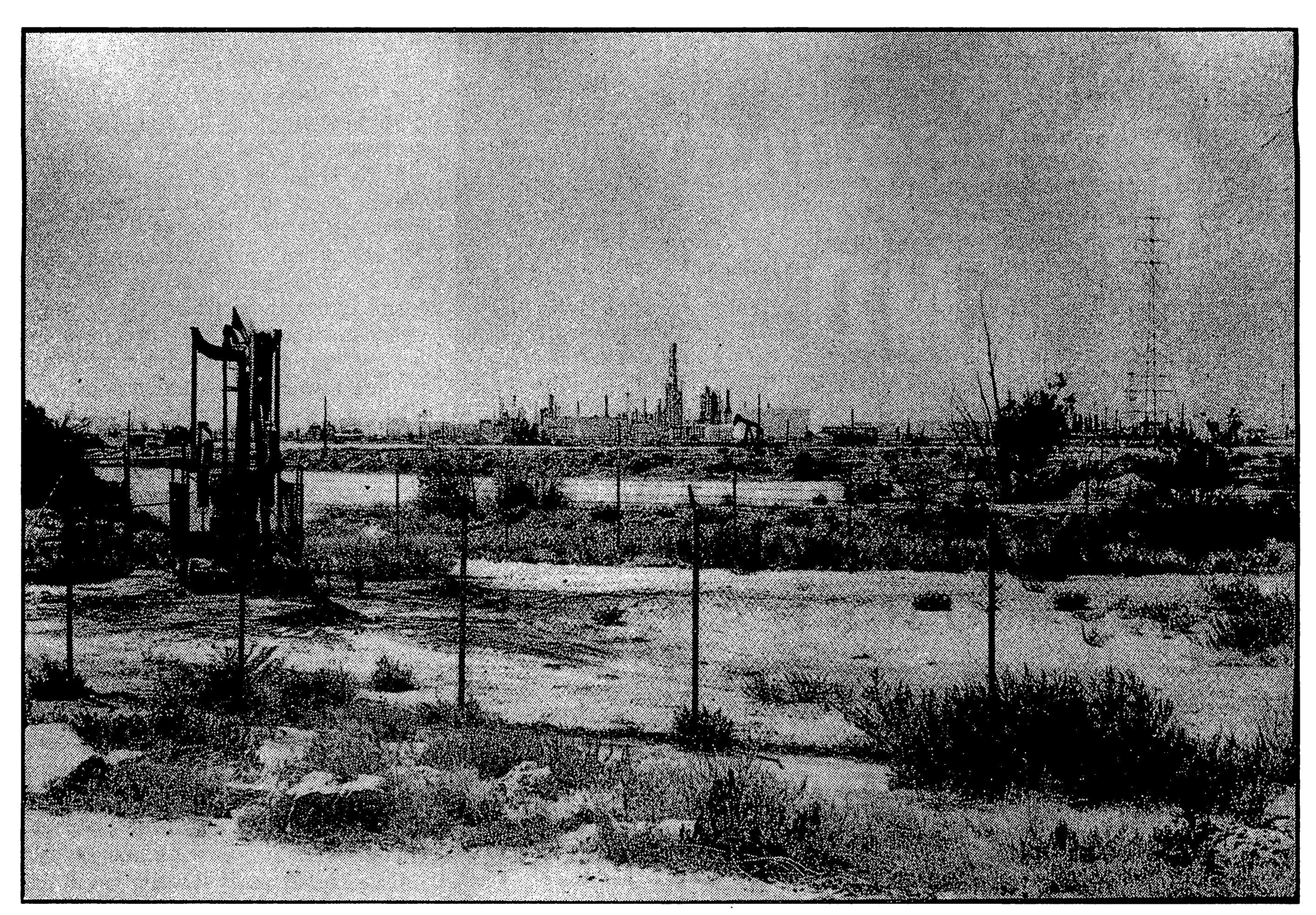
If one is suffering from a garden-variety stress headache, this dubious form of treatment would probably do no harm and might even be an effective placebo. If one were suffering from a malignant carcinoma, however, the resulting delay in conventional treatment could have disastrous consequences. I hasten to add that you will find a disclaimer with virtually every crystal-healing regimen which states that the company does not advocate crystal therapy to the exclusion of more traditional medical care. I'm certain that this does not stem from any altruistic concerns for the "patient" or even any lack of faith in the treatment itself, but rather a decidedly non-utopian concern with lawsuits brought about by clients (or surviving relatives of particularly unfortunate souls) which could threaten the company's laid-back cosmic existence. New Age crystal murderers? Sounds like the title of a lousy movie to me.

I suppose the occult could be a useful ally in some spots. I envision the use of penis candles to liven up dull singles' bars—so much more provocative than the usual nondescript candles in red glass containers found in most places. And those who interpret the current world situation and make predictions for the future in terms of stargazing stand as much chance of being right as anyone else—look how much astrology did for the Reagan administration. Sometimes the inability to make decisions reaches into very high places. Cabinet members? Witch doctors? Is there really much difference?

So what do we learn from all of this? Well, if you've been paying attention, you will have surmised that there are a lot of people out there whose lives you can fuck with at will, and they'll not only thank you for it, they'll pay you for it! For me, the comedic value derived from contemplating the general paucity of mental function in these geeks is at least partial compensation for the infuriating intrusions they make on my daily life. Am I an elitist? Probably. Do I have a chip on my shoulder? Definitely. But I didn't put it there—someone else did. I have only attempted to illuminate a small section of a large subject in this article, and I hope you can see that the possibilities are at least as large as the capacity for human ignorance. If I have held up the penis candle of truth in the darkness and illuminated just one pair of eyes, one lobotomized brain, I consider my mission to be accomplished. What mission? Figure it out for yourself. ■

A self-described former white slave, Frank Beehler is currently formulating a world religion which embraces Christianity, Scientology, Satanism, and anything else which he feels he can blend into a profitable scam.


DEATH
in
BAKERSFIELD
ANSWER Me! spends July 4th
in the "All-America City"



Beautiful, beautiful Bakersfield.

They call it a "dry heat," this choking air that assaults us in thick, blurry waves, dulling our senses and slowly melting us. This type of heat can shrink a grape into a raisin while you watch. It's dry enough to turn lungs into chili pods. There's no escape, for the sun's rays ricochet off of chrome, glass, and mirrors. I feel like a pasty Cornish hen being roasted by the withering blast. Sweat and suntan lotion form a milky slime on my skin as I wilt in a crucible of patriotism.

July 4th, 1991. Happy, happy birthday, America! Tonight, pretty bombs will go BLAM! and POW! and THWOMB! in the sky. Families will congregate to eat charred red meat and chug down some brewskers. I have my own fond remembrances of this day: mewling my two-year-old intestines out at concussive fireworks, getting stitches under my eye in a later childhood accident, and dropping some windowpane acid at a mid-eighties laser show. It's a day off, a chance to blend into the crowd and watch shit blow up.

Call me a moral defective, call me a sociopath—just don't call me, because I won't pick up the phone—but I don't sit on any side of any political fence. Anyone who does is a simpleminded sucker. I'm neither offended nor uplifted by the 4th of July. Sure, America's past is a gory saga of plundered land and exploitation, but what nation's isn't? We didn't *vote* this country into existence in 1776—British heads had to roll! Indians had to be cleared out! Slaves had to be imported to juice the economy! Whether that's good or bad depends on how *you* feel it affected you. If I were black or Native American, I'd probably think 'America' is a sinister concept. If I were a rich WASP, I'd probably gush with patriotic fervor. But I'm neither, so I DON'T GIVE A FUCK. Don't start breathing fast and getting all moral about it—deep in your heart, you don't give a fuck about me, either.

Liberals are dumb because they don't understand that history is a murderous power struggle and that their standard of living was purchased with blood; conservatives are stupid because they try to justify the murderous urge. At *ANSWER Me!*, we're comfortable with ourselves; we don't need to justify anything. When people talk about man's "higher nature," we break into gales of laughter. We know everyone's capable of murder, so why fight it? Once you accept that you're an animal, you can relax and let others graze, too.

But not everyone's so tolerant, so us cloven-hoofed critters decided to spend the 4th in Bakersfield, which boasts of being the "All-America City." Only a hundred and thirteen miles out of L.A., its residents speak in a southern-fried twang. They use phrases such as "soda pop" and "you bet." Country-and-western gods Buck Owens and Merle Haggard's careers sprouted on these dusty streets. Bakersfield is California's shit-kickin'est, straw-chewin'est, hot-diggety-doggiest town!

Pearl of Kern County, Bakersfield sits in the midst of such dazzling urban centers as Taft, Oildale, and Wasco. The area's clean, linear, Protestant farmlands could be Nebraska or South Dakota, but they're not. That's what's so fucking scary. Bakersfield is an overgrown truck stop on the edge of the vast, brutal Mojave Desert. It's a rural outpost in an urban state, a burg unaffected by flotation tanks or liposuction. People here are isolated, suspicious of intruders. Culture is an equal mix of Dust Bowl doggedness and sun-shriveled sensory deprivation. It's God's lil' acre.

"This is the salad bowl of the nation," brags *Bakersfield: The Official Visitors* [sic] *Guide,* "and in the center of the plate-glass flat land is the cluster of lights called Bakersfield. At twilight it looks like a beacon in a quiet land." Jesus Christ, that's inspiring!

But we picked the hottest July 4th that Bakersfield ever recorded. Our warm, sweaty butts perch on the gravelly sidewalk at the corner of 20th

TEMPORARY

NO PARKING

THURSDAY
9 A.M. TO 1 P.M.

BY ORDER OF THE
BAKERSFIELD POLICE DEPT.

TOW AWAY ZONE

and Chester. "We are celebrating all the wars today," says the amplified voice of Rusty Shoop, news anchorman for Bakersfield's Channel 17. Rusty's across the street from us in a canopied judges' stand. You can tell he's a big potato in these parts—they made him emcee of their July 4th parade, dag nabbit! "It's only gonna get up to a hundred and eleven today," he joshes. "No big deal. Welcome to Kern County." Our faith in journalism ebbed a bit when Rusty was proven wrong. It only reached a hundred and ten.

I hate a parade. As we wait for it to begin, the Bakersfield biker cops play with their motorcycle sirens, modulating the loud BLOOPs for comic, singsong effect. It's shrill, it's irritating, but whom can I complain to? The parade kicks off with more ungodly, spine-shivering sirens, these from a local ambulance company. Decontextualized onto cassette, the cacophonous alarms and slabs of white noise sound like a ghetto aflame or the Battle of Britain, but they're not. It's family entertainment. That's what's so fucking scary.

Next comes an army tank, propelled by triumphant soldiers. "I don't think that thing's loaded, but I'm glad you brought it down here today," jokes Rusty. "Thanks for bein' here! How you kids doin'? I bet it's hot inside that thing, isn't it? God bless you guys."

A rat-a-tat drill team slogs mechanically past us, then a Boy Scout troop whose adult leader barks out his marching orders with a *little too much* enthusiasm. "Here's some of our *younger* men in uniform today," says Rusty, tugging at our heartstrings.

At the tempo of a funeral procession, the Bakersfield Classic Thunderbird Club creeps down Chester Avenue, each shiny 'Bird carrying a veteran of a different war. Following the T-Birds is a string of drab personae: councilpersons, VFW members, county supervisors, and state assemblymen. Then comes a Bakersfield Fire Department truck carting more Desert Storm veterans. "Good-looking fire engine," marvels Rusty. "See if you can put out this heat today." Members of the Valley Bible Fellowship march by stiffly, toting a banner which reads, "IN THE ARMY OF GOD." Rusty says, "God bless you guys." Another ambulance department brings up the rear, their sirens serrating the infernal air.

As the crowd disperses, we meet Buddy, a veteran in his sixties with an ashtray-sized indentation in his forehead. In a Weehawken, N.J., accent that could scrape barnacles off an aircraft carrier, he tells us he's Jewish and fought against Hitler. Buddy says he weighs eighty-seven pounds, down from over two hundred. He proudly shows us his concave skull, recalling how doctors operated near his brain after a bus slammed into him. He hands us a medical document describing him as "childlike and gullible... nonviolent." We ask what July 4th means to him. "Independence Day," he answers. Our requests for elaboration prove fruitless.

Soul-stirring speeches are planned at City Hall. It's only a few blocks away, but the walk would immolate us. We retreat for the car. En route, we see a morbid memento inside the window of a closed office: a copy of the traffic citation James Dean received hours before he crashed his convertible sportster near Wasco.

Since it's had all morning to broil, our car is an oppressive coffin. Even the air conditioner blows warm and musty. The vinyl steering wheel and armrests could cauterize skin on contact.

Under the merciless yellow orb, the City Hall ceremony takes place unhindered. "The resurgence of patriotism that Desert Storm rekindled is gratifying," says one aging speaker, poised dramatically between a podium and a church bell. "It is too bad that it takes an Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein to light our fire."

We ask an Hispanic Vietnam vet what the 4th means to him. "Well, [it's] very important," he says. "It means freedom, patriotism, and a welcome back home to the Persian Gulf and Vietnam vets. I was wounded in Vietnam. I served two tours over there, and I came back in early '69, and we didn't have a welcome home for no Vietnam vets, and we consider this as a long-overdue welcome home for us." We thank him as he limps away.

At the podium is a Persian Gulf vet, possibly the most wooden speaker in existence. "America held together not only on the battlefields," he intones, "but also on the streets of the United States.... Your backing helped us win the war against Eye-rack."

Looking like some M*A*S*H understudy, a woman in battle fatigues steps up to the mike. "I'm deeply and personally honored by just *being* here today," she says, and we wonder if the sun's getting to her. She recounts how her husband, a Viet vet, reassured her as she wrote her will, promising a safe return to Bakersfield. "I'm honored by... my mother, who's back there wearing the MY DAUGHTER WEARS

COMBAT BOOTS T-shirt," she says, and the listeners chuckle. "I finally extracted from her a promise that she would look in the body bag when I came home." The listeners stop chuckling.

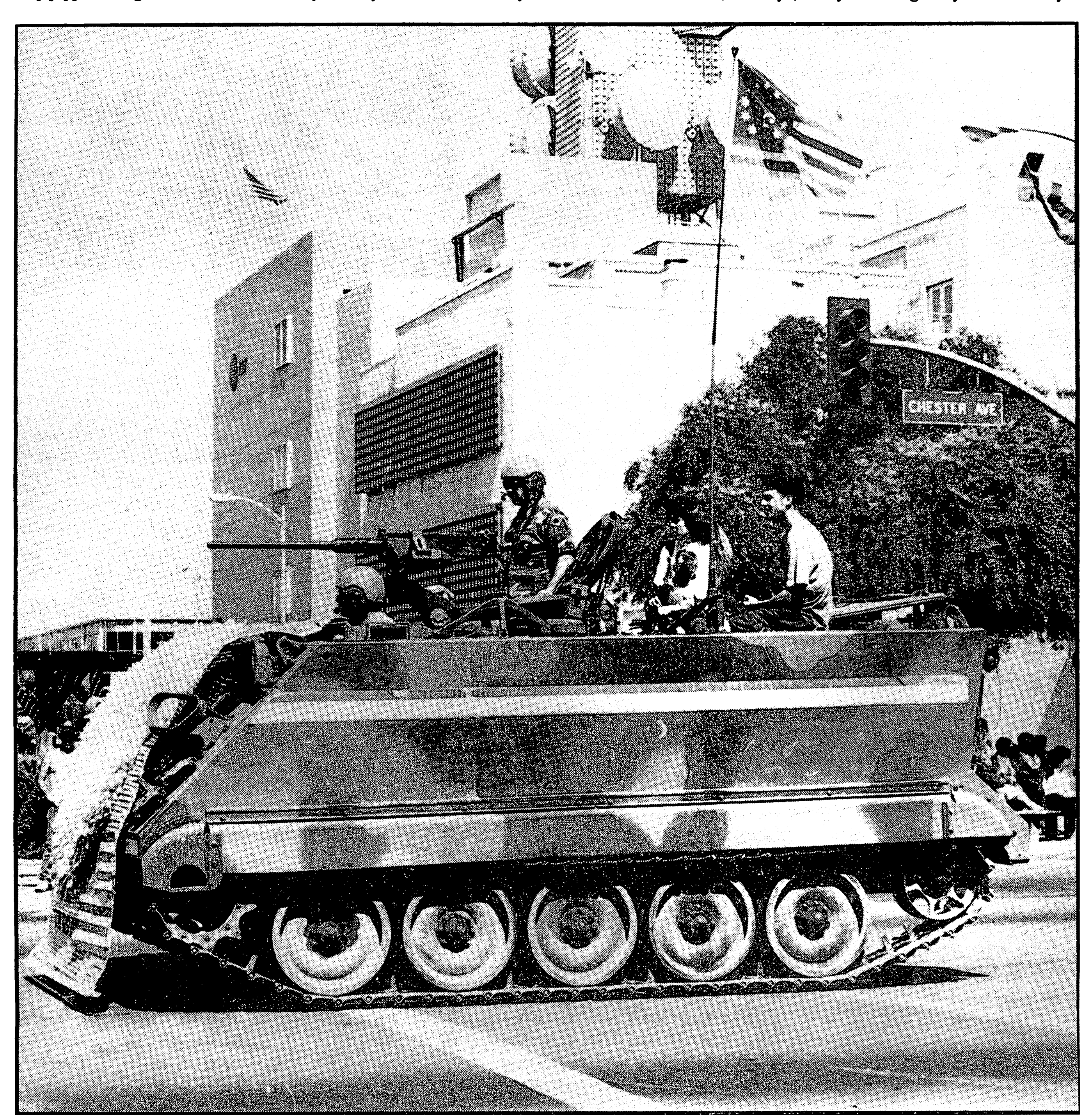
To break the tension, a prim woman with an acoustic guitar leads the audience in a medley of musical fascism which includes "Proud to Be an American" and "This Land is Your Land." Kids rove about unsupervised, taking pretend rifle shots at each other with their flagpoles. The folk songstress leaves, and a pesky seven-year-old male treats the crowd to *his* version of "Proud to Be an American," sounding like Alfalfa Schweitzer if he had been raised on a cotton plantation.

As the ceremony ends, the chief speaker asks the crowd to "ring the bell to show our freedom rings. Our freedom includes sacrifice. Please step [up] and ring the bell. Each and every one of you." Each and every one of us does.

At no one's prodding, a man in full colonial garb takes the stage and begins reciting the Declaration of Independence. His honking accent is reminiscent of Mr. Healey's from *Green Acres.* He doesn't stop with the mere text, but continues rattling off the signers' names: "George Clymer, Pennsylvania... William Ellery, Rhode Island," etc. Pockets of foam form around his flapping lips.

I ask how he's able to endure the temperature dressed in a heavy Continental Army uniform. "Soldiers are used to heat," he proclaims. "Being a soldier is always miserable. It's never easy."

A soldier? He says he served in the armed forces in Southeast Asia. "I think that Bakersfield is a lot more patriotic now than when I came home from Vietnam in '73," he says, his eyes darting away. "I can testify to



The U.S.A.'s military might: so strong, so devastating, it nearly gives a guy a boner.

that. They thought I was a murderer. My mother and father were scared shit of me when I came back from Vietnam. They didn't know when I was gonna pick up a rifle and haul off and kill 'em." Uneasy silence. We wish him luck and leave, two steps at a time.

They're handing out awards for today's parade at the local American Legion post. Glossies of war vets in horn-rimmed glasses line the halls like some Shriners' purgatory, but the air conditioner works and they serve free Dixie cups of coffee. The preamble to the Legion's constitution is hand-painted on one wall. Among other goals, it says the group bonds together "to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars" and "to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses to make right the master of might." In other words, to spill blood only for *good* causes.

I bump into Buddy, the vet with the dented head, and we sit at a table with him. I ask if he's happy we won the war. "I knew you boys were gonna win the war," he says, mistaking me for someone dumb enough to risk my life for cheap gasoline. I'm not *that* Californian. Buddy launches into a discourse involving Bush, "Reegan," Israel, Congress, and the FBI that could politely be called rambling. He frequently interchanges World War II and Desert Storm references, calling the latter Desert Fox. "I wouldn't be surprised if you go out there again," he tells me. "You're still under orders, right?" Right. Buddy leans closer: "Go in there and wipe Germany off the map."

After a stultifying series of awards, an interminable procession of silver plates and thank-yous, we again spot the Vietnamese vet wearing Paul Revere threads. As we exit the Legion post with him onto the flaming mid-afternoon streets, he slings a colonial flag over his shoulder and declares, "Life is never easy in the infantry." He asks us to join him in a twenty-mile hike under the hellish sun to Memorial Stadium, where they'll be shooting off fireworks in a few hours. Think I'll pass. Bathed in sweat, we sprint back to the car's safety.

A conservative radio jock is bitching about Jello Biafra's "Stars and Stripes of Corruption," some lyric about wiping your ass on Old Glory. "That's disgusting, that's repulsive, and it's sad that it's gotten to this point in this country," he fumes. He draws a parallel between Christ on the cross and our soldiers in Desert Storm, claiming that we need a sacrifice to rescue us from evil.

It's too hot to think. We stop at a city park situated along a stream. There's a breeze, but it feels like God's hair dryer. We roost at a bench where a young black man is sipping from a brown bag. His neck is covered in flaking skin and pink scar tissue. Mannered and articulate,



"Being a soldier is always miserable. It's never easy."

he says his name is Charles, a Zimbabwe native who's lived four years in the United States.

Charles says he's run across bigotry, a few "odd people" in Bakersfield, but not flat-out oppression. "Wherever you go, [racism] is bound to be there," he shrugs. "All over the world, people *are* prejudiced, so that's something that's kind of universal." You mean Spike Lee's wrong, and it's possible for blacks to be racists? A cop car passes, and Charles hides the brown bag. "I would really say that maybe this country is one of the best, both in terms of social life and everything else." We expected Charles to be our firebrand, to deliver a scathing manifesto against America's heart of darkness. Instead, he calls it a "great, great nation."

We bid him farewell and strike out for the fireworks show. His testimony unsettled me. I had planned to use Bakersfield as a symbol of the Fire Next Time, the currents of racial separatism which flow just beneath the flag worship. Only ten minutes into town yesterday, we saw two things which bore out my premise. The first was a hayseed type with "100% HONKY" tattooed on his left shoulder blade. Moments later, we found ourselves behind a car with a license-plate frame which read, "PIUTE INDIAN... TRUE AMERICAN." While others saw unity, I sensed imminent chaos.

But Charles's words skewed my thesis. It might be shitty in America, but maybe, just

maybe, it's shittier everywhere else. In conversation after conversation, I've had Iraqi, Vietnamese, Salvadoran, and other immigrants tell me how great this country is. The only people I've heard complain are the ones who were born here, like me. I begrudge George Bush his words from a speech earlier in the day: "We are very *lucky* to call America our home." What other country would tolerate this magazine? Morocco? South Korea? *England*? Anywhere else, I'd be floating in a river with my balls stuffed in my mouth.

As we walk up to the stadium beeline, I find a Halloween mask lying in the hot, wet grass. It's a generic demonic carnivore with small horns and wolflike fangs. I liked it so much, I wore it on *ANSWER Me!*'s cover. We are given small U.S. flags on plastic sticks as we file into the open-air incinerator.

There's a choir, more unlistenable speeches, and the same T-Birds and fire engines from the morning's parade. Then comes the crowd-pleaser, a dope-sniffing German Shepherd from Bakersfield's police department. A "drug suspect" stands on one end of the playing field, wearing enough padding to qualify as a Michelin Man impersonator. Through bullhorns, the police ask him to surrender. He doesn't, and the doggie chases him down, clamping onto his arm and wrestling him to the turf. The multitude roars. YEAH! RIP HIS GUTS OUT! SPREAD HIS ENTRAILS FROM END ZONE TO END ZONE!

The wooden soldier from the City Hall ceremony gives another lumbering speech. He calls "Eye-rack" a "barbarous nation" and says, "The independence of America has been challenged by hostile countries since 1776." He fails to specify exactly how Eye-rack jeopardized America's independence.

"Will you fight for your country?" he asks, and I answer, "No." I say this quietly, to avoid being lynched. "I ask that you vigorously agree with my challenge to take arms," continues the embodiment of Kern County's military sexiness. "I ask that you fight, and fight to win. The freedom of America is in your hands. I also ask that you pray, as everyone before you has prayed, that this will indeed be the last war, and may your children never experience the pain brought on by war." I'm confused—you want us to fight, but you *don't* want us to fight?

The fireworks start, and, by gosh, it's just like a Bon Jovi concert. The show is called, imaginatively enough, "Proud to Be an American." Seeking to evade a traffic quagmire, we head for the parking lot. People sit on their car hoods, staring upward, their eyes lit by the colorful fusillade. We search for our rent-a-car under the strobe effect of skyrockets and total darkness. It feels like Baghdad under siege.

The temperature has finally fallen under a hundred, so the air conditioner begins to spout wisps of cool oxygen. I vibrate the windows with a live cassette of Napalm Death. Combined with MAX AIR, the speedmetal ices my perspiring skin. I chew the grisly cud of the day's events. *Yeah,* I think, *these people like big explosions and the concept of mass destruction. They celebrate America's killing capacity in a detached, cinematic way. They've been bombarded with violent images to the point of insensateness. But if they came face-to-face with some real carnage, they'd spit up their hot dogs and corn-on-the-cob. Or at least they wouldn't dig it so much.*

I park outside a liquor store at First and Chester, on the poor side of town. The store offers all the legal intoxicants: alcohol, tobacco, Lotto tickets, and scabrous, cellophane-sealed porno mags. My guts twitter as I peep at cans of bourbon mixed with cola in handy six-packs. DELANO SATANAS BLOOD is etched onto the Lotto stand, calling to mind my recent trip to Kansas, where I saw TOPEKA CRIPS painted in blue. L.A. gangs pop up in the weirdest places.

We lounge in the car and observe a series of alkies hit the store for second and third rounds. A fat prostitute in an ass-high, bubble-gum-colored skirt walks out toting a forty-ouncer of 8-ball for herself, one for her pimp. An ambulance shrieks by, and we debate whether or not to chase it. We stay put for a few minutes. Two white cops wheel slowly past us, staring into our car, and then make a U-turn two blocks down. Feeling conspicuous, we jet.

On California Avenue we encounter a dotted line of pink warning flames and are forced to turn off. We see fire engines and ambulances, but it ain't a parade. We park and investigate.

Someone has been killed. Local television news would later describe what happened:

> Last night around 10:30 here in Bakersfield, there was yet another hit-and-run accident, this at California and L Streets. Two pedestrians were near a crosswalk when they were apparently struck by a vehicle which was headed westbound on California. The vehicle then fled the scene. Another vehicle heading west on California apparently did not see the victims who had been struck, and they were struck again. [Name withheld at editors' discretion], 39, of Bakersfield was pronounced dead at the scene. Another victim was taken to Memorial Hospital with major injuries.

We mingle into the murky crowd which surrounds the crash site. The victim, whom the locals call "Catfish," lies crushed and bloody under a convertible sportster. People stand expressionless, eyes fixed on the cadaver, while a tow truck is summoned. We quietly ogle for almost an hour, until it's ten minutes to midnight. When workers finally position the truck to hoist the car off the corpse, a group of firemen lift canvas tarps, blocking the audience's view.

Moans rise from the crowd. "Shit! I can't see!" somebody whines.







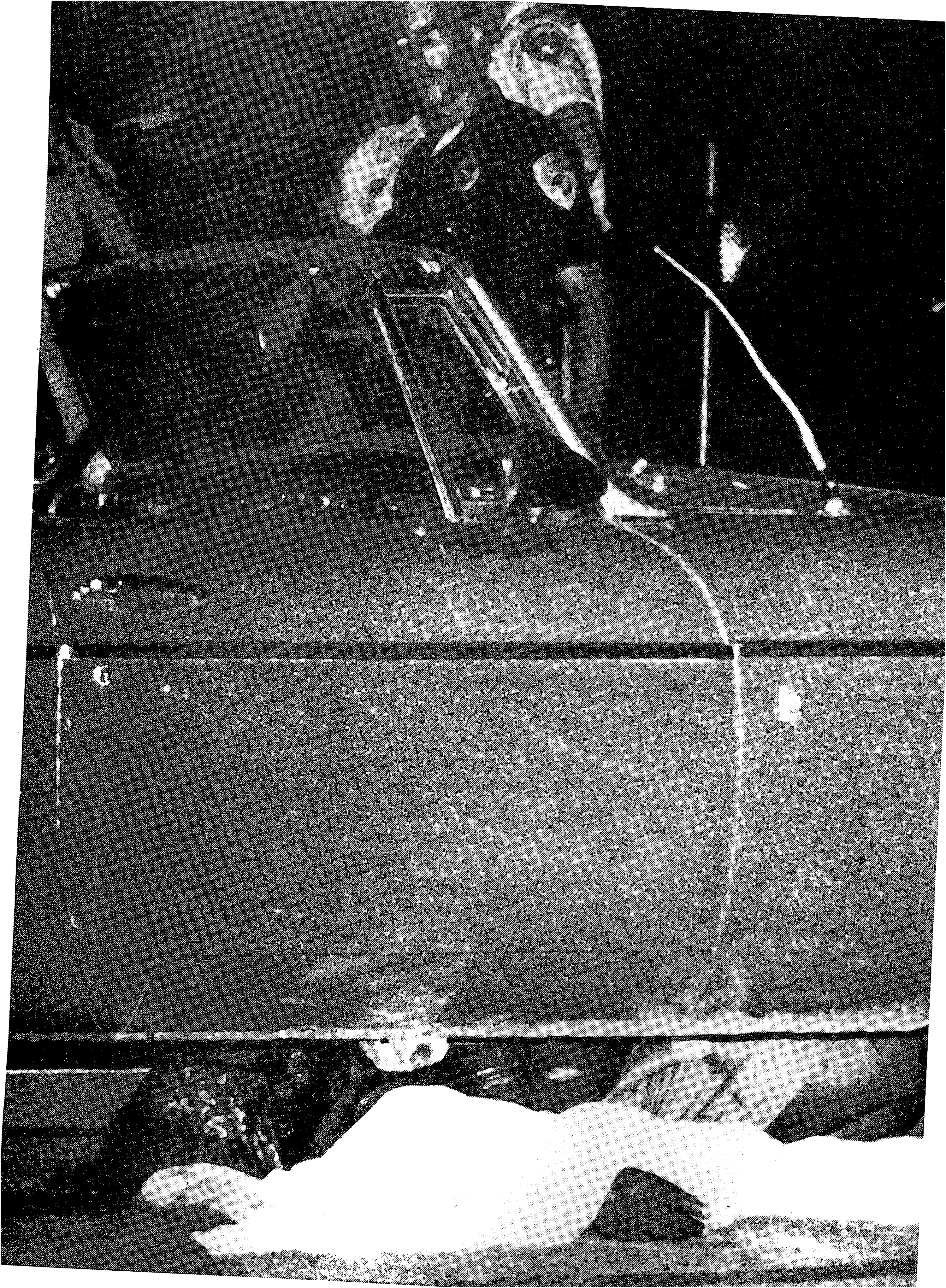
"Aw, man, I've been waiting a half hour!" complains someone else.

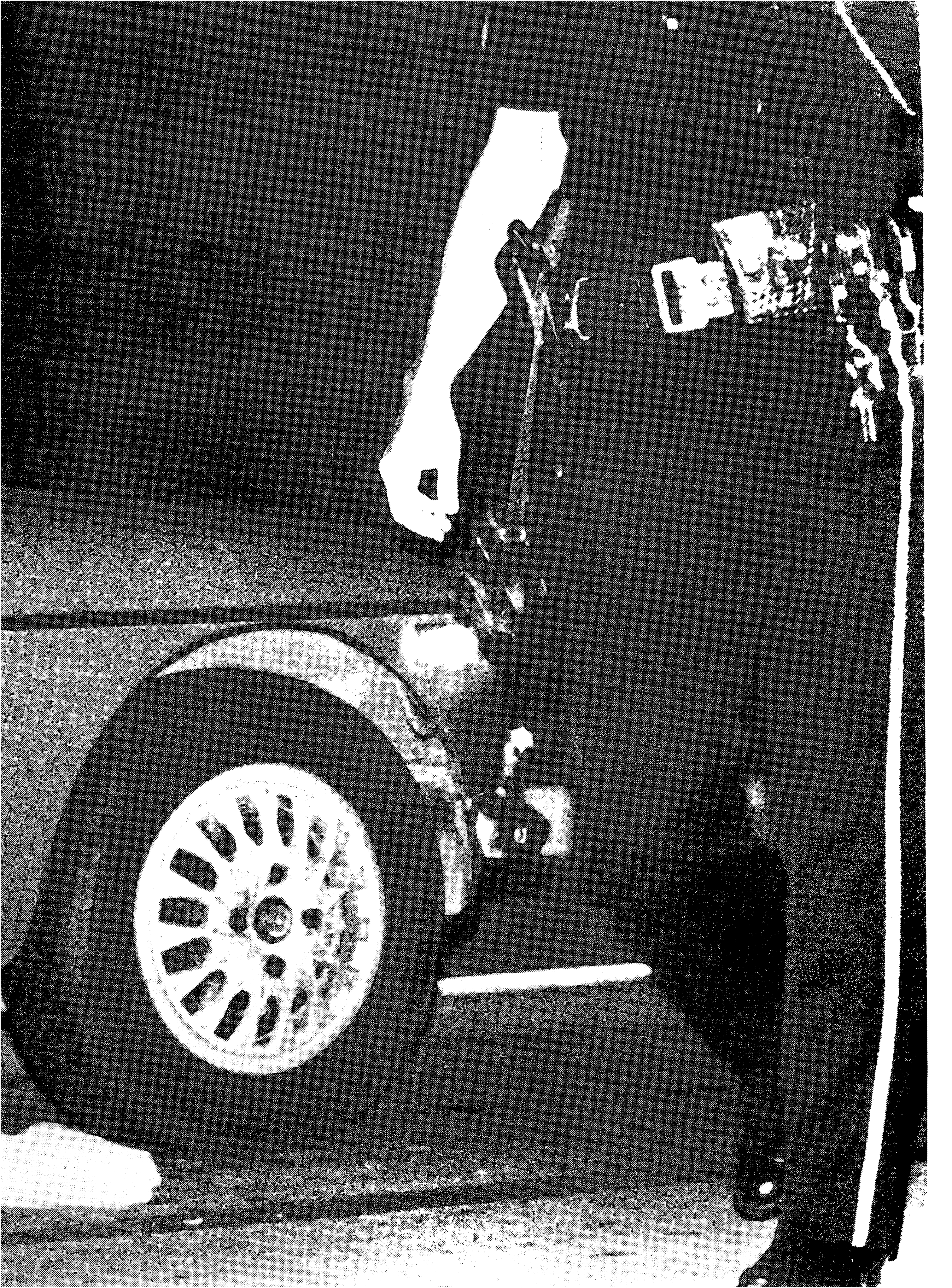
"I'm gonna be sick," says a small girl, who then giggles and cranes her neck for a better look. Even though many seem to have known Catfish personally, they surge from the pavement onto the street to catch a glimpse of his mangled carcass.

Three teenaged males crouch on their haunches, gazing at the wreckage as if it were a TV screen. A chubby Mexican walks past them and laughs, "You guys are really *into* this shit!" They look up, smile, and continue watching.

This is the real thing, brains lying on the ground, and the spectators love it. I guess I was wrong. They crave blood, whether sanitized on the screen or warm and sticky on the concrete. A human sacrifice delivered them from evil (and boredom). Staring at the dead body with passive interest, we feel like true Americans. That's what's so fucking scary. ■

Centerfold: The real thing. 





24 HOURS ON SUNSET

INTRO: WHAT, ARE WE CRAZY?

Are we sick, or just dim-witted? Who the fuck would want to drive up and down the same street for twenty-four hours *without pay*? This is a friggin' *magazine,* not a Beckett play.

Well, we like to *test* ourselves. We knew that it would be bad for our nerves, our lungs, our appearance, our attitude . . . but we didn't care. So with stupid determination, we plodged through two hundred forty-six miles, eighteen cups of coffee, eleven near-accidents, seven injuries, two nude dancers, and a riot. We lived ten years in Los Angeles in one day. As the night wore on, we gradually acquired the against humanity. Armed with six joints of decent green bud, we set about on the *ANSWER Me!* Driveathon. Was it a classic road saga like *Easy Rider* or some Wim Wenders epic? Was the night one of Dionysian excess with us bloodthirsty Huns sacking the Appian Way? No. This is L.A.—we don't even understand what those references *mean*. Unlike New York, history's being *made* here, not remembered. If you want to know the truth, there was nothing on TV that weekend.

We define 'Sunset' as the uninterrupted blacktop salamander which starts at the Riggin Street in Monterey Park. It's the same goddamned road, unbroken for thirty-one-and-a-half miles, so we choose to call the whole shebang 'Sunset.'

We picked Sunset Boulevard because it carves out a representative biopsy of life in L.A. County. It treads over every socioeconomic fault line imaginable, past all ethnic permutations. There were other streets almost as tempting: Hollywood Boulevard is pure, delicious scum, but it's only five miles from stem to stern and



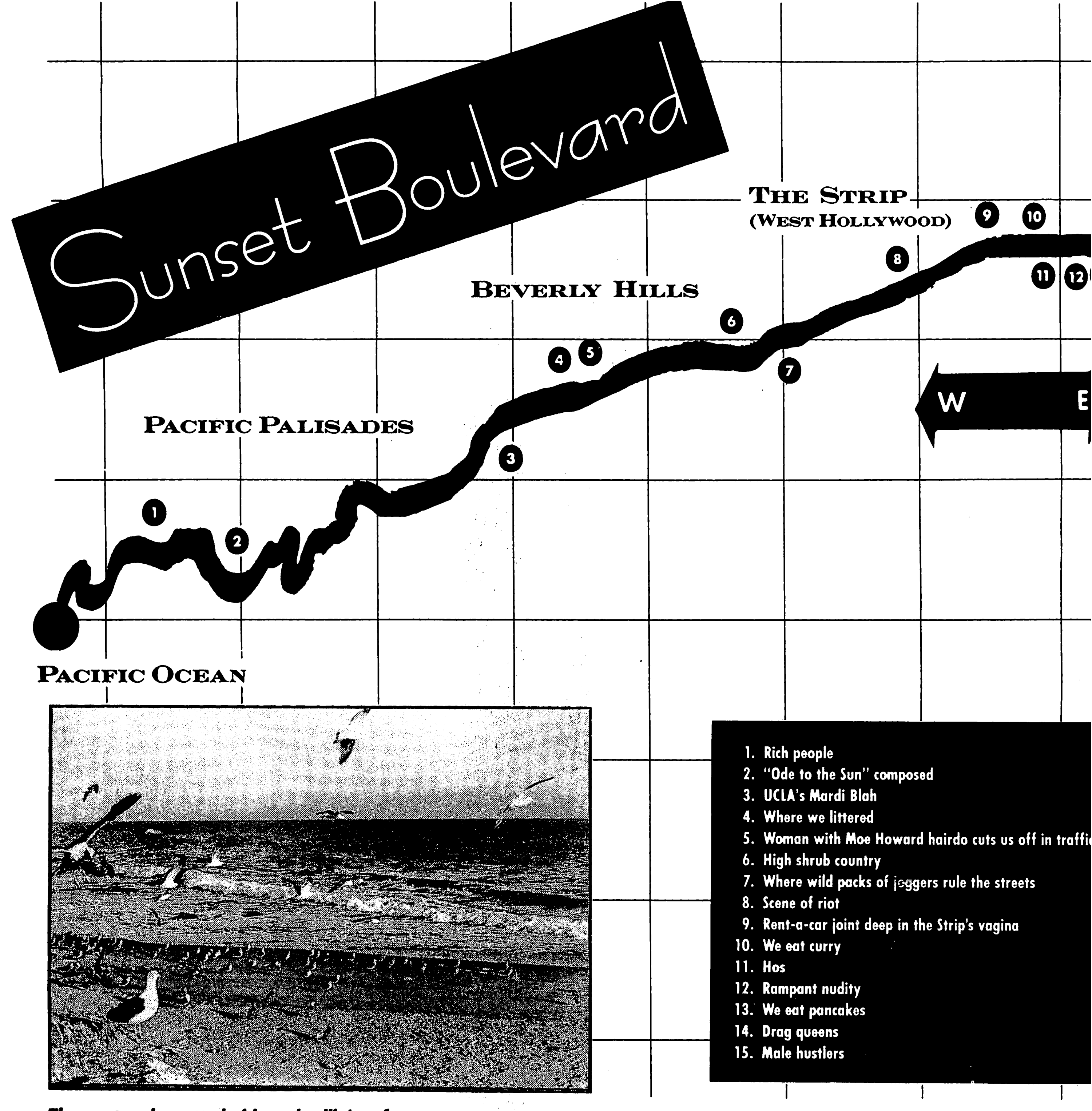
mental illness which makes this city like no other on the globe.

I guess we should introduce ourselves. "We" are the *ANSWER Me!* editorial staff, a misanthropic husband/wife team protected from society by intelligence and an automobile. I'm the male component, and for this article I'll be doing the writing and driving. My darling companion sits in the passenger's seat, spewing diatribes

ocean, winds through the affluent west side, devolves into the Strip and Hollywood's sperm palaces, drags through teeming downtown sections, crosses into East L.A. *varrios*, and stops anticlimactically at a dead end in Monterey Park. What the city planners call 'Sunset' turns into Macy Street downtown, Brooklyn Avenue in East L.A., and (anticlimactic)

pretty much the same bacterial strain wherever you go. Central Avenue is interesting and might be more violent than Sunset, but it's not as diverse. No city on earth is as diverse as Los Angeles, and no street in L.A. goes through as many different neighborhoods as Sunset. Let's push the metaphor—Sunset Boulevard *is* Los Angeles, an asphalt-covered valley of schizophrenia.





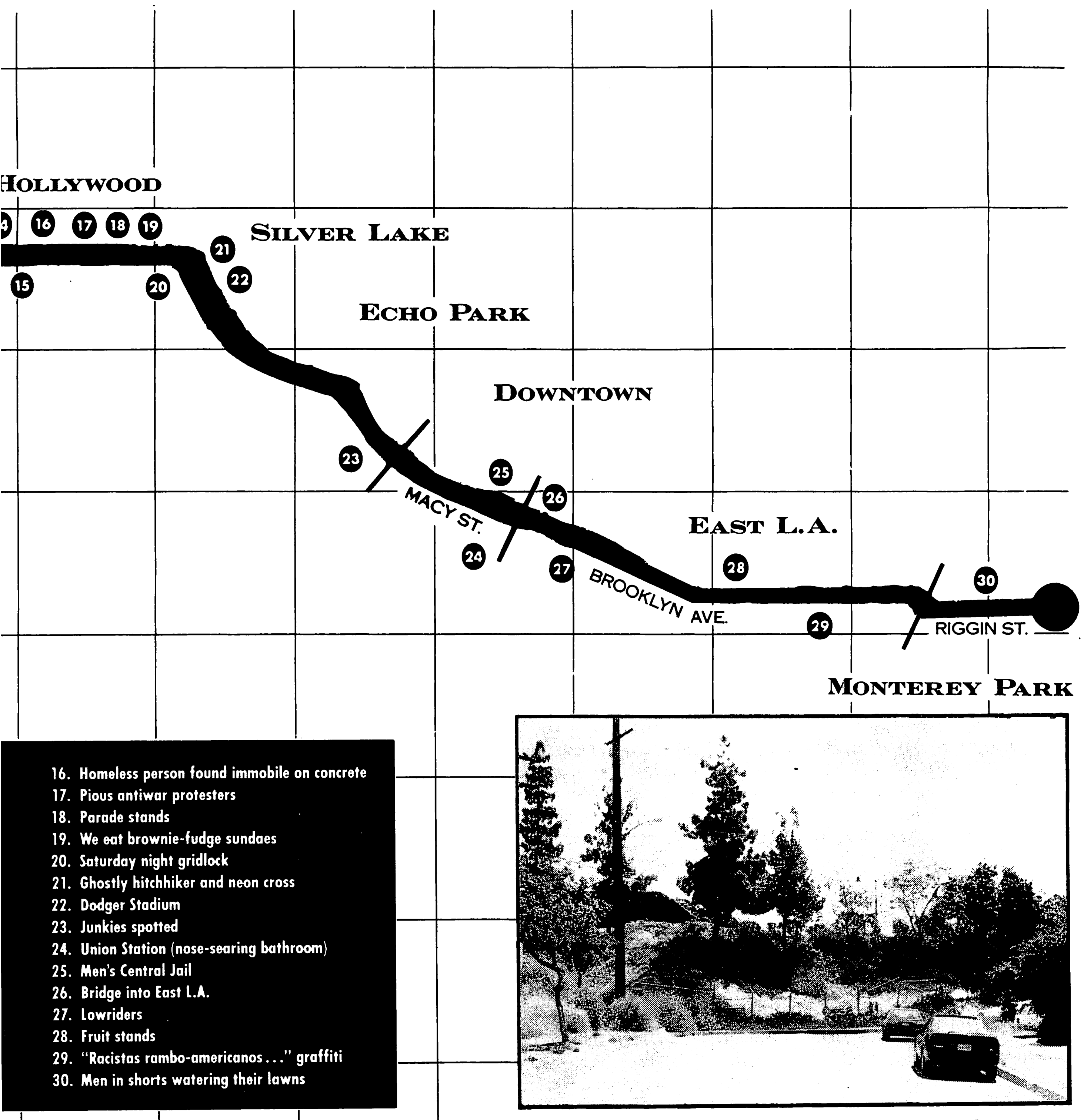
The west end: pretty boids and rollin' surf...

Sunset Boulevard is the only place in the world that *I* know of where you can be listening to a phony plastic white boy like Vanilla Ice rap on the radio about his .9mm automatic, get cut off in traffic by a phony white boy in a BMW, make phony "BANG! BANG!" hand gestures at the phony white boy as you're behind him at a red light, then have the phony white boy whip out a REAL .9mm automatic and point it at you (this actually happened). Maybe in other cities, fantasy is one thing and violence another. On Sunset Boulevard, they're permanently fused.

We planned our twenty-four hours around a Saturday night—wet, glistening, and foul-smelling. It was late spring, summer's erection still an unfolding blossom. It was a night of blood sacrifice, of humility lost. All the forces of cataclysm unleashed their tension in volcanic fury. We went out and smelled the lava.

Did we, for one minute, feel like part of a larger community, a city perchance? Not on your life. We weren't looking for the ties that bind. We were trying to figure out why L.A. didn't cannibalize itself years ago. *ANSWER Me!* learned one thing—no one connects in Los Angeles, except through violence or a common enemy.

We own a 1968 Mercury Cougar, an eight-cylinder Grim Reaper symbolizing America's past dominance. Too bad it's a wheezing monster that would never last through twenty-four hours of city driving. So we made reservations with a rent-a-car joint on Hollywood Boulevard, planning to



The east end: dull, borin' Riggin Street in Monterey Park.

pick up at 8 a.m. Saturday and drop off a day later. At **7:53 AM**, as we walk toward the rent-a-car place, we see a shell of a human straddling a concrete embankment, his or her face mushed into cement. Definitely homeless, possibly dead. Wonderful omen....

The blank-faced rent-a-car worker has no record of our reservation. Ironically, and maybe because Christ intervened, the dumb-ass 411 operator a few days back had given me the number to the wrong place, a franchise smack-dab in the heart of Sunset Strip. It's about five miles away, and it's already **8:15**. Sweat on my temples, screaming cranial frenzy. TAXI!

Our taxi driver is a straight-haired Aryan three months out of Leningrad named Kirill. "The United States is crazy," he says predictably, "but people are the same everywhere." He says he prefers L.A. over New York, so we tip him.

We rent a blazing-red Ford Probe from a clerk with tidy manners and a British accent. "We're doing an article called '24 Hours on Sunset,'" my wife tells him. "We're going to drive up and down Sunset Boulevard for twenty-four hours." No reaction whatsoever, not a word, no eye contact. We pull out of the parking lot at **8:30** on the dot. Kirill was right. People *are* the same everywhere—they SUCK!



Hollywood, the world's glamor capital.

JOGGERS AND SHRUBS

We cop a right up Sunset Strip's western flank, past Mexican kids selling MAPS TO THE STARS' HOMES. "When the Music's Over" wafts from someone's car, providing us with the article's first annoying Doors reference.

West L.A. on Sunset is where you find the Los Angeles of stereotype, where people are tanned, rich, and stupid. Arrogant, slick motherfuckers. Well-heeled, Oil-of-Olay-rubbin' dickheads.

We're soon into Beverly Hills, and that's where we first see joggers, pounding along in flabby bunny hops. A bicyclist glides by wearing the standard gear, a striped helmet and riding pants so tight they smush his balls into twin pancakes. More joggers pass with college-logo sweatshirts and fluorescent squeegee bottles. People must be incredibly healthy around here. Or at least incredibly health-*conscious.*

Beverly Hills is so well-tended it's nauseating. We roll past orange, lavender, pink, and purple azaleas, bushes trimmed into unnatural cubes and spheres. Two-foot-tall "WARNING: THIS HOME PROTECTED BY..." spikes are planted into each lawn. "I hate Beverly Hills," spits my spouse.

I notice that besides the traffic and joggers, there's almost no sign of human life. The film *Sunset Boulevard* describes "those great big houses in the 10000 block...a great big white elephant of a place, the kind crazy movie people built in the crazy twenties," but we can't see *any* houses. There are too many shrubs. These giant estates are fortressed with high gates and high walls, but most of all high SHRUBS. You can't see anything from the road. L.A.'s landed classes shield themselves from the grimy masses via shrubbery. They smoke crack, shoot dope, and murder each other in Beverly Hills. They're ruthless, cunning, and conniving, just like in the slums, but they've got shrubs to protect them.

The air is crisp, with traces of honeysuckle. A curve brings us past Bel Air's twin white pillars, mighty emblems of the Caucasian *Schwanz.* A monoxide-bellowing truck passes, disrupting the clean, happy air. Four *vatos* sleep on garden tools in the truck's rear. Other Mexicans are spotted: men sprinkling lawns, women in aprons waiting for buses. Y'see, rich gringos feel guilty if they employ poor gringos to do their menial work.

Sunset gets curvier, and the wealth becomes yet more overstated. The road winds and winds, and the people whine and whine. The area is sparsely inhabited by L.A. standards. There are stretches of dusty palm trees and quiet green hills, a hint of what the region must have looked like before humans violated it. Only now, the gentle hills are marred with houses thrust up on stilts to catch an ocean view.

It takes us thirty-two minutes to get from the Strip to the Pacific, that vast aquatic toilet which will one day swallow all this shit. They charge five bucks for beach parking, probably an attempt to keep out the riffraff like us. The water looks blue and inviting, but our skin is far too pale for direct exposure to sunlight. Fuck the beach. L.A. has such a "beach" image, but the *real* people, the ones gasping in the inland smog pits, hardly ever see the beach. Fuck a beach. Big fuckin' deal.

I swing the Probe around and head back east, past the Transcendental Meditation Center and Self-Realization Fellowship. Blecch! It's not bad enough that they're rich—they have to be *spiritual.*

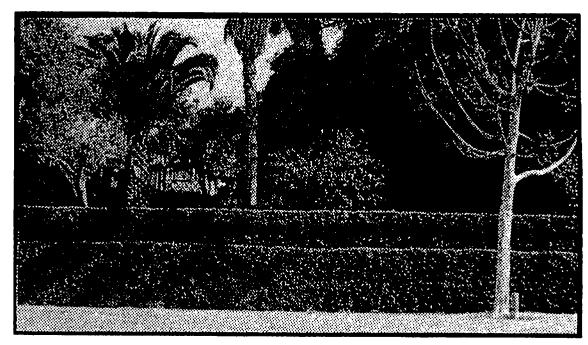
It's barely **9 AM**, but the traffic's starting to coagulate. I'm reminded of a passage in the film *Glen or Glenda*: "The world is a strange place to live in. All those cars. All going someplace. All carrying humans which are carrying out their lives." Ugh!

WORLD OF BODILY FLUIDS

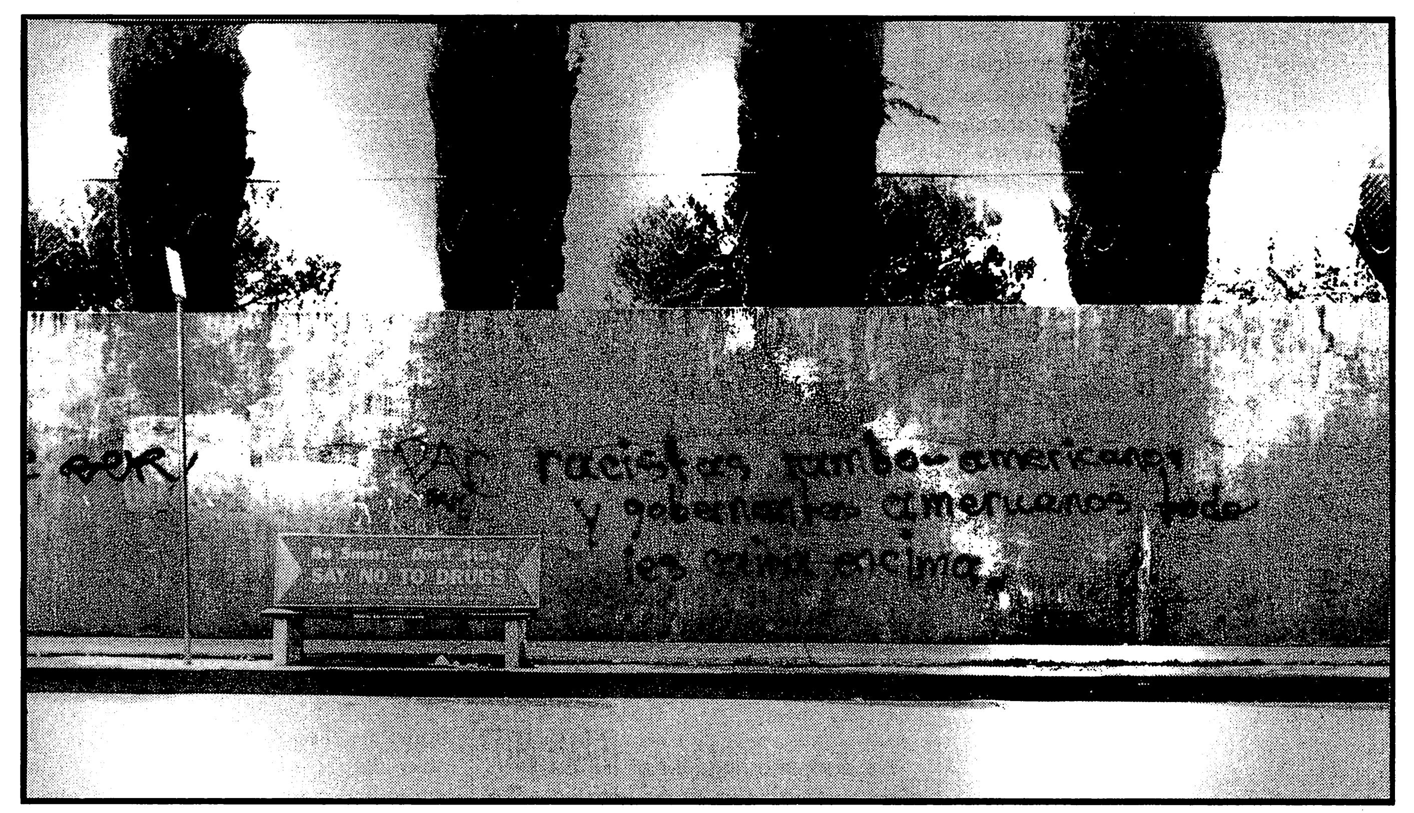
We're soon back at the Strip, which we like to think of as a pair of spread-eagle legs begging for the city's schlong. Bounded by Doheny on the west and Crescent Heights on the east, the Strip bottoms out at Tower Records, which you might consider its cervix. The Strip is a corridor of dirty dreams and engorged penises, the G spot of L.A.'s sexuality. Threatening, unavoidable billboards plug all the bad new action movies. The Marlboro Man, a titanic stud on the eastern side, sucks on a ten-foot cigarette. The Strip usually reeks with stagnant humanity. For now, the whore's asleep.

We slip into Hollywood, a wonderland of yogurt emporia and crack vials, tall palm trees and cheap hand jobs. The junky, gummy, piss-stained pavements seethe with microorganisms. "Pubic hair" motels, where the bedsheets always have at least one stray pubic hair, sit in rude clumps. We tried to rent a room at one of these motels when we first moved to L.A., but the desk clerk thought we were hooker and trick. Guitar shops and Thai restaurants line the area, but the tattoo parlors and nudie bars stick out like genital sores.

I decide to eat breakfast at IHOP, the sticky, always bustling factory of fried dough. I order the Rooty Tooty Fresh 'N' Fruity special. My beloved selects cheese blintzes with strawberry preserves and syrup, which combined look like an



Sunset in Beverly Hills: shrubs.



East L.A. attitude, found on a cemetery wall. Roughly translated, it means, "Racist Rambo-Americans and all American governments: It'll all come falling down on you."

abortion's remains. Dishes clank, ice cubes crash into glasses, and burnouts read the city's "alternative" magazines. They watch me take notes into my microcassette. I stare back at them and keep talking into the recorder like any good CIA agent does.

Now, we love IHOP and its scrumptious, sweetened, batter-based food products, but the bathrooms in their Hollywood outlet are notorious. We don't blame the management—there's just a lot of shit flowing in Hollywood. A wave of defecatory aromas mugs me as I enter the boys' room. Needing only to pee-pee, I play "sink the battleship" with a turd someone had thoughtfully left behind. A Nazi SS logo and the words "Lil' Loco" are scrawled on the walls. The pancakes start to swell in my stomach.

Nourished, we pop back into the Probe and head east. I crank the stereo, which the customer before us had naturally tuned to a metal station, and it's "Runnin' With the Devil" by the Strip's own Van Halen. We pass a male hustler, then a drag queen.

At **10:18 AM**, reviewing stands are already being set up for tomorrow's Desert Storm parade. It seems the U.S. won a war or something, and everyone's libido was restored. Men get brick-hard, and the women are lubed like truck axles. Yellow ribbons flap from almost every car antenna. Tomorrow while we're sleeping, America will unite to celebrate its collective ejaculation.

Suddenly, an offer of salvation: "THINK MORE CLEARLY...FIND OUT ABOUT THE PURIFICATION RUNDOWN...HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS FREED FROM DRUGS...FREE COMPUTERIZED PERSONALITY TEST... ENTER HERE...," then a volcano exploding on a marquee. Something about Scientology and Dianetics. Must be one of those trade schools.

Sunset then merges with Hollywood Boulevard into the Silver Lake area, where Armenian newspaper offices sit next to 25¢ peep shows. The atmosphere is stoked with overcooked spices and burnt rubber. The mostly Hispanic Echo Park district is jammed, and we see the day's first police chopper. The cumulative effect is cheesier, prettier than L.A.'s west side. *ANSWER Me!* approves.

The road peaks at Maltman, revealing downtown's impersonal edifices. We dip downward. A body lies prone on the sidewalk at a bus stop. He's white, struggling to stand, his features sunken like wax drippings. Looks like a junkie. His black partner sits on the bus bench, sloppily trying to lift him. The black dude's T-shirt reads, "STONE ZOO...STONE FUNK." He mumblingly refuses our feigned offer of help. I guess it's nothing a little heroin won't fix. We drive away, light a joint, and get STONED.

Tourists in white terry-cloth leisure suits file into L.A.'s birthplace, Olvera Street. We shoot through a tunnel and emerge within view of Men's Central Jail, the world's largest short-term correctional facility.

INTO ANOTHER COUNTRY

The Probe crosses a bridge which spans the piss-puddle L.A. River onto Brooklyn Avenue. East L.A. is overwhelmingly Mexican and might best be considered a separate nation. Like South-Central and other low-income 'hoods, it seems situated to catch the brunt of L.A.'s automotive and industrial fumes. We pass auto salvage, auto glass, auto parts, and auto wreckage shops, all of them layered in gang graffiti. Thick grey exhaust coats my nostrils. East L.A. is always hazy—something lost, something not yet reclaimed, all shrouded in fallout clouds of smog and angel dust. We pass a billboard showing a man with a cigarette in his mouth, half of his face eaten down to the skull. It reads, "Me Muero por Fumar"—I died for smoking.

Near Soto Street it's a logjam of fruit stands and open-air sales. Piñatas jostle with caged parakeets for sidewalk space. Women strut their plumage past mariachi bands and salacious *cholos*. Downtown L.A.'s grey towers rise obnoxiously in the distance, laughing their asses off at the multicolored poverty.

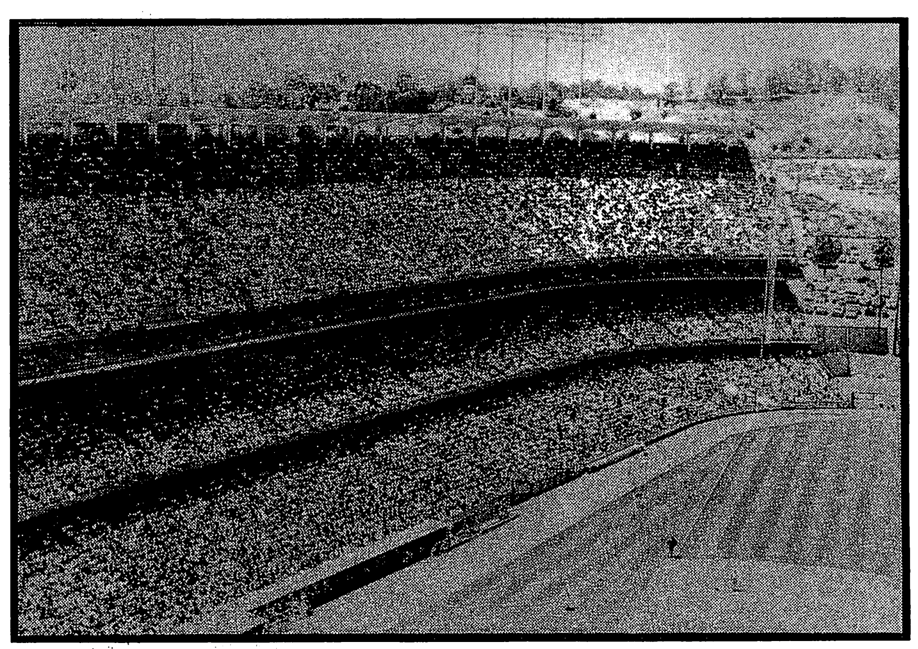
The multitudes thin out as Brooklyn Avenue heads east, under the lonely 710 Freeway and past the Maravilla housing projects. Without a whisper, Brooklyn turns into Monterey Park's flat, docile, residential Riggin Street. The area's no different from any other of L.A.'s endless "sprawl" 'burbs—swaying palms, one-story houses, and men in shorts washing their cars—a panorama visually identical to suburban Florida.

It ends at a barbed-wire fence in an unassuming cul-de-sac. We park and inhale the last scraps of a roach. Birds chirp. Jolly cotton clouds bounce along in the blue-eyed sky. We can't remember such peaceful quiet. If we lived somewhere like this, we'd gradually shed our anger and toxicity like an old skin. We'd hose our driveway regularly and gather leaves off the sidewalk. We'd be like everyone else. I hit the gas and leave as quickly as I can.

Back on swarming Brooklyn we see another exemplar of indigenous culture, the lowrider. This one's a Toyota with a seismic stereo system. A fluorescent orange ball bobs atop the antenna. Two chrome silhouettes of naked women spread their legs on rubber mudflaps. A useless, boomerang-shaped spoiler is welded onto the roof. The dash is carpeted. Funky serrated white plastic wipers replace the originals. A black leather bra harnesses the car's runaway sexuality. The driver, wearing a tight *cholo* buzz cut, is selling it for $1,500. "It has an alarm, it has an Alpine, it has speakers, it has *everything,*" he says eagerly. What else do you need in L.A., except a gun?

DODGERLAND ÜBER ALLES

We cheated an eensy bit as we cruised west of downtown. Elysian Park Avenue is a two-block conduit between Sunset and Dodger Stadium, ending at the entrance gates. The stadium isn't technically *on* Sunset, but it's so dadgum close we decided to "do" a Dodger game. It promised to be a twisted night, so I thought I'd rest my accelerator toe for nine innings. Get some sunshine. If you want to say we cheated and technically spent only twenty-and-a-half hours on Sunset, fine. Hope your mother dies soon.



"People dot the seats like jimmies on the ice-cream cone of the collective unconscious."

We park in a huge lot at **11:48 AM** and begin hiking up to the entrance. The smarmy sound of organ music hits our ears. "You see, I worry about RBIs," says some jerk walking near us.

I pass through the turnstile without incident. Out of nowhere, a security guard wearing the mirrored shades and spiky moussed hair that seem to be required for white law enforcement in the Southland stops me.

"Sir, excuse me, do you have any cans or bottles in your bag?"

"No."

He ignores my answer and begins fondling my hiking bag as it hangs from my shoulder, rubbing my inanimate papoose. After a pause, he lets me go. I must look suspicious.

We sit up in the T Deck, almost in the back row, on hard plastic chairs. A pained singer grapples with the National Anthem on the massive TV screen. An aggressive peanut seller runs by, and we ponder his title: Peanut Man? Peanut Vendor? Peanut Boy? Peanut Concierge? As the next salesman nears, we ask for sodas. He sighs, pointing to the words ICE CREAM, printed in small letters on his sack. He lifts two fistfuls of ice-cream sandwiches and shakes his head ruefully as if to say, "I sell ICE CREAM and ICE CREAM only, you assholes!" Well, fuck you, pal, I wouldn't brag about it.

The crowd is the usual mix of fans, professionals, and unemployed alcoholics. Many men are wearing shorts, which should be illegal. Some drunk guy who looks like David Letterman takes off his purple T-shirt and starts spinning it over his head. This goes on for, say, five minutes. He's happy in his dumb little world. We hope he falls over the guardrail and splatters into the decks below. Someone sits in the row in front of us and takes off *his* shirt, revealing apelike amounts of body hair. He swabs it all down with amber globs of Bain de Soleil. More men remove their shirts, revealing more hairy asses. Why are sports fans always so fucking *fat*? One dude has a snarling rash all the way down to his anal crack. Livid boils are visible from forty feet away. PLAY BALL!

Baseball means patriotism, corporate sponsorship, family values, babies—everything *ANSWER Me!* is against, right? People dot the seats like jimmies on the ice-cream cone of the collective unconscious. They become one mind. Baseball brings them together, giving them common cultural meaning. They identify with the home team, though most of its members aren't natives of the area. Fans yell at the players, using first names as if they know them personally. Everything the crowd believes in is affirmed when the Dodgers get a hit. Claps start from nowhere and build into a rhythmic thunder that would make Mussolini proud. People applaud in blind insect reflex. The pipe organ gooses the mob onward toward mass hysteria. Doodle-a-doo-doo-doo—CHARGE!

That terrifying tribal ritual known as "The Wave" begins. Following some unspoken cue from back in their brain

stems, one section of sunbaked fools all raise their hands heavenward, followed by the next section, then the next, around the stadium, transforming the crowd into a giant rippling reptile.

Testosterone casualties trample over each other in their quest for a foul ball, acting like the swine they are. The person who retrieves the ball hoists it high, as if it were the head of a slain rival. More people begin spinning T-shirts over their heads. They scream with such joy, such throat-curdling gusto. Is this entertainment or a fascist rally? You decide.

It's the first baseball game I've been to in twenty years, and nothing's different. Players are changed, hand signals are given, and men scratch their genitalia, all at the pace of figs crawling through a colon. It must soothe old men's bowel problems or something, because I don't understand the appeal. The game's so slow, it's hard at times to tell whether play is in progress or has been halted. Even the crowd looks stone bored. Many aren't even watching the game. I'm tempted to run naked onto the field and disrupt the flow of play.

Instead, we go where the action *always* is—the bathrooms. There's a stinking steel trough where all the men stand along and piss. As their "toy elephants" hang out, they discuss who they'll vote for in the All-Star Game. My co-editor reports that girls in the ladies' room were giggling about how rapidly one of their friends urinates. So much for action.

Since the Dodgers are playing the Mets, we decide to view the event as a literary device, a metaphor for L.A.'s cultural ascendance over New York. The Dodgers, like us, came to L.A. via Brooklyn. At mid-game they're blowing it, and we realize we have to move back to New York to make our magazine credible. We consider killing ourselves.

The Dodgers come from behind and beat the Mets, validating L.A.'s primacy. Everyone in Los Angeles, from the mayor down to the skankiest psycho roaming our streets, won today.

At **3:26 PM** we're back in the Probe, opening the dinky sunroof. The exit lanes are a nasty maze, making us cranky. "A murder," I say. "We want a murder. We want something extremely extreme. It's Saturday night, for God's fucking sake!"

"I'd like to see a fight, a car accident, an earthquake, a suicide, *and* a murder," offers my doe-eyed companion. "*That* would be entertainment."

There are stirrings of a fight on the way out. Beery jocks, oxlike dudes with muscle shirts, are shouting and poking at each other. No punches are thrown. As is always the case with society, we're disappointed.

We finally squeeze out of the exit like an egg popping out of a hen. An ambulance passes, and we get excited. "Thousands could get killed," I tell the microcassette, "as long as we don't get a scratch on us."

RIGOR MORTIS SETS IN

It's almost **4 PM**. Sunset looks ill, a gaping canyon of despair and fossil fuels. Traffic on both sides is as knotted as dreadlocked pussy hair. I jockey the Probe for position against buses, four-wheelers, and monster trucks. Predators surround us.

We're starting to feel grubby. A grease slick spreads on my face. My hair's getting windblown, and I feel like the pores on my nose are filling up with dirt and turning into blackheads. Boogers hang within my nose like miniature stalactites. My eyes squint as deposits form in the corners of my mouth. My brain jiggles. How do I stop it from coming loose?

Protein. We're in an Indian restaurant, swirling amid manic sitar music. The female singer sounds like a house cat being raped. I stare into a stained-glass rendering of the Taj Mahal. The room starts to tilt like a fun house. I'm tripping without psychedelics, completely disoriented a mile from where I live.

I order beef curry, not mild, not medium, not spicy, but *extremely* hot. I want my stomach to howl from the spices. I want to grind out my insides, push myself over the limit tonight.

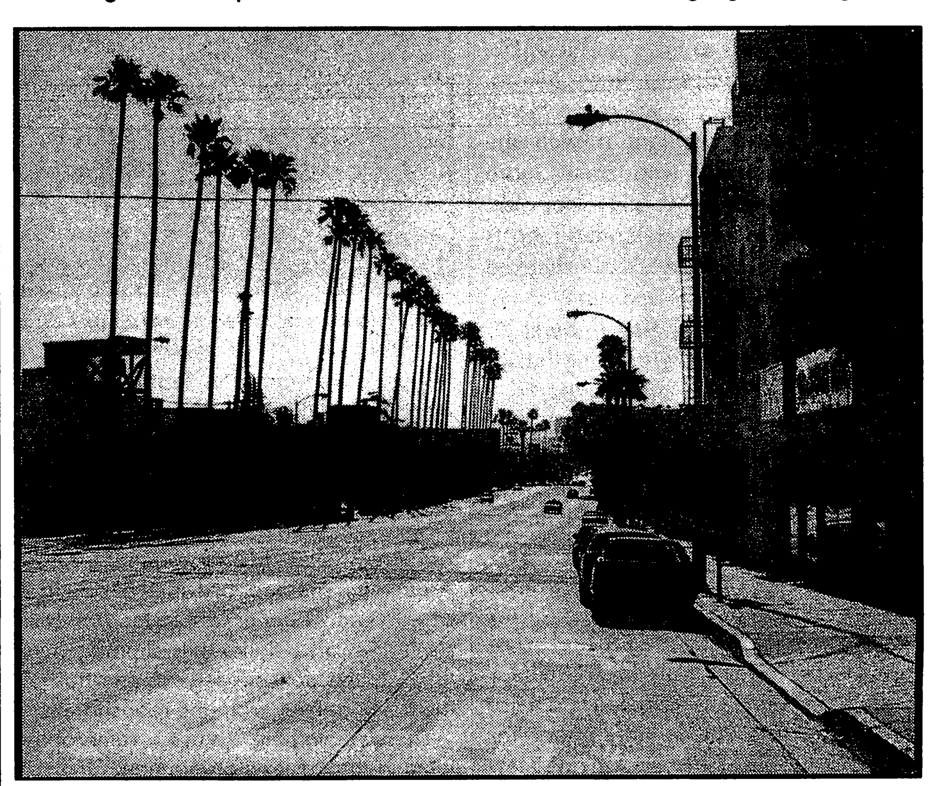
Are we prone to engage in scintillating dinner conversation? No. We stuff ourselves and get out. After curry, garlic, and coffee, my breath is an act of war.

Back to the bathroom to throw water on my face. I eye my *doppelgänger* in the mirror. I look hostile and paranoid, with reddish skin. My lips feel like they're cracking and bleeding from the curry. Graffiti over the urinal reads, "I QUIT!" and "LOVE IS FOR SUCKERS."

ODE TO THE SUN

We head toward the beach as the Sunset sun sets. A woman with a Moe Howard haircut and a "Boycott Veal... Stop Factory Farming" bumper sticker cuts us off as we take another hairpin Beverly Hills turn. She doesn't care if she cripples us, but she wants to spare all the world's sweet little calves. How noble. How *Nobel.* We toss a coffee cup out of the window. Fuck the environment, and fuck the hypocritical political causes of the ruling class.

The sunshine dapples the area's nice, nice streets with a light gold flaking. I take



A gaping pit of despair and fossil fuels, or just a cheap place to get a hand job?

the beachbound curves with more confidence than in the morning. It's half-darkness, half-light, and no visibility. Roadside trees interrupt blinding shards of sunlight. The awesome glare obscures faces and cars. Dust floats through the air, filthy but beautiful, lighting the back of my brain pan. Barking out the words, I compose an impromptu "Ode to the Sun":

Bright, stinking, hazy sun!/
Poisonous, cancer, death!/
Gut-wrenching sun!/
Gives us life, yet kills us!/
Makes plants grow, yet causes melanoma!/
O sun, we worship you, yet we hate you!

We reach the ocean at **6:48 PM**. Valet-parking attendants who resemble Beach Boys rejects swarm around the Probe. We trudge onto the sand and snap some pix of seagulls. Inane chatter rises from a beachfront restaurant. Overcome with revulsion at the upscale ambience, we hurry back to the valet waiting line. We feel lost amid fake swagger, designer shades, and smug polyester smiles. People tell sunroof jokes and anecdotes about their "Beamers." When the Probe pulls up, we jump in and burn rubber out of the lot. The west side is everything that's bad about L.A. Let them have their beaches, their seagulls, their clam chowder!

We meander back to the UCLA campus, which is hosting its annual Mardi Gras. The school grounds look unreal, like a model-train set blown up to life-size. Now, I've been to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and believe me, UCLA, you're no Mardi Gras. Our main problem is with the students themselves, who seem more conservative than most sixty-year-olds. Males with crew cuts and Bermuda shorts scoot around on minibikes. Apple-cheeked women wear docksiders and rugby shirts. Botany pupils point at flower buds on campus trees. I get the eerie feeling that it's 1963 and The Beatles haven't hit yet.

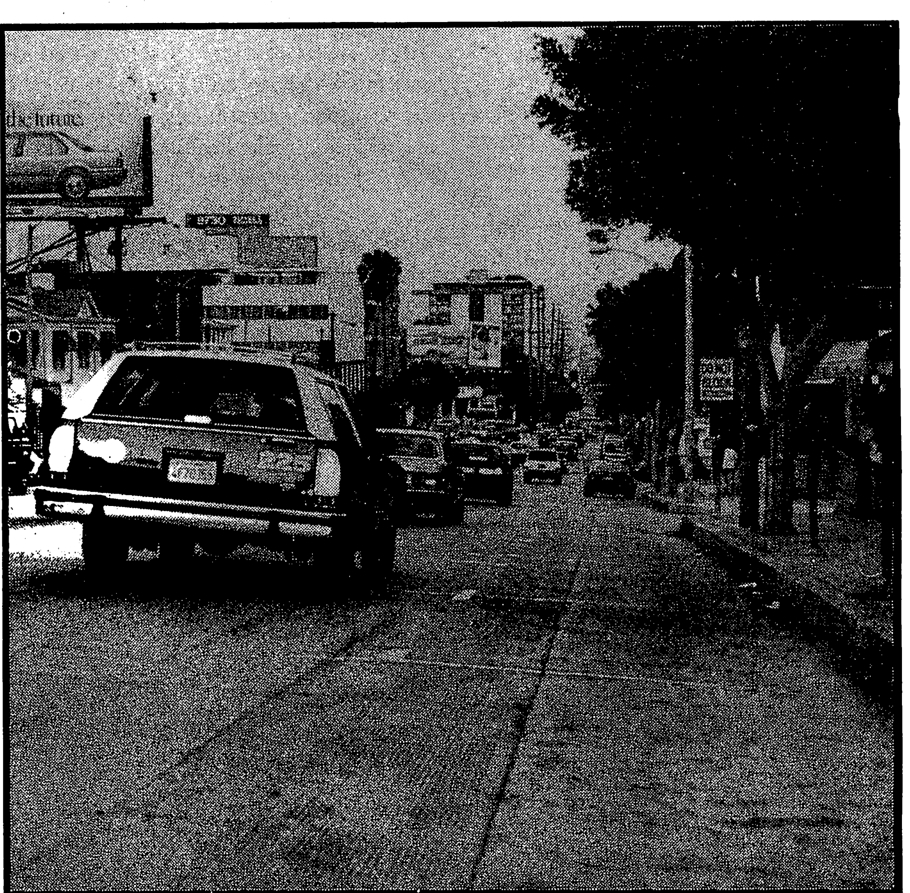
College tuition snowballed over the eighties while financial aid evaporated. Most of these square-ass kids are rich, hence cloistered, hence boring. If this is what they're like at twenty, I can't imagine how uptight they'll be at forty. And they're all going to be in positions of power. They should be setting the campus on fire! What happened to the good ol' days? We hear later that the Mardi Gras spilled into a riot in Westwood, so maybe there's hope for today's youth. We'd see our own riot a few hours later.

TOTALLY NUDE

Our path worms back into Hollywood, which is cloaked in silvery, ashen, early summer dusk. Electric signs start to flicker on. We park under one that reads, "TOTALLY NUDE." We walk into a cramped entrance, where a hostile junkette hostess snatches twenty dollars from me. KISS's disco-driven "I Was Made for Lovin' You" pumps from a tinny sound system. It's dark and stuffy. Women in rouge and bikinis slouch languidly on stools. We sit at what looks like an oversized red shuffleboard table. Our hostess shoves two sodas in front of us, leaves with nine more bucks, and crosses the room to loudly berate the bartender. When she's had her fill of verbal violence, she walks up to a mirror and starts posing for herself.

Two feet above our faces, a naked woman shakes her perfumed snatch. Around the shuffleboard, men of all races sit with sweaty upper lips. Instead of their penis, they offer dollar bills, slipping them through the dancer's legs as she flashes them a bent-over, from-the-rear shot.

There's nothing more vulnerable-looking than a sex-starved man. One sits alone, dropping a bill a minute, staring at the woman as if she's a morgue specimen, nodding gratefully as she displays her jugs. After two songs, the naked woman gathers her crinkled cash and tiptoes away. The glum depressives ready their dollars for another dancer, who storms out in high heels and lingerie to Joan Jett's "I Love Rock 'n' Roll." She seems disappointed that my wife and I don't ogle her labia, so she mambos over to where the money is. I wonder what bacterial risks I'm taking by slurping from the Coke glass. Ever the hypochondriac, I feel pimples forming in my mouth. Better hit the road before we get infected or murdered.



The Strip's western leg heats up as L.A. prepares to shoot its load.

Night has fallen outside the strip house. It's **8:36 PM**, our halfway point, and I realize I'm driving without my headlights. I find myself laughing Satanically into the microcassette for no reason. East Hollywood's lights pulse like Vegas. Downtown is dead and ominous. Celebrity shrink David Viscott chides people on the radio, telling them to grow up.

We laze into East L.A.'s orange industrial night. It's a humid glow. A fingernail moon watches over the Mexican cowboy bars. Brown men in ten-gallon hats whistle at women with gravity-defying

hair. We touch Riggin Street's dead end and head west in search of gas, coffee, and rest rooms. We find a Shell station. I pump some gas, piss, and tear off the "driver's nib" on the plastic lid to my seventh cup of java.

Now the id comes out to play. My blood rushes as we motor back to the city's guts. People are stalking for sex. They'll do anything in their laughable search for excitement. The night air lifts our neck hairs as we push westward into a little less smog, a lot less light.

DESERT STALL

Tailgated. Gridlocked. Inch by inch, we ooze down two Hollywood blocks in a half hour. Every vehicle around us throbs with bass-heavy hip-hop. It's mostly N.W.A and Too Short, but every car booms something. None of it is rock 'n' roll.

Cars honk in trebly furor. Guys lean out of windows and yell "ow-oool," that wolflike sound they make when aroused. This is straight, gooey status ritual. People spend hours on their hair, systems, and cars just to come here and get stuck in traffic.

Cops shine a flashlight in our faces as we move tortoiselike past the Desert Storm parade reviewing stands. We're forced to detour near the KTLA tower, which is swathed in a twenty-foot yellow ribbon in honor of tomorrow's blood orgy. We pass dry-docked parade floats, all red, white, and blue tinsel. There's a retarded-looking bald eagle and a Liberty Bell sponsored by Taco Bell. How *proud* we feel when we see them! Another phone shrink, this one female, demands that her caller repeat the words, "I'm scared to death. So what?"

We're finally allowed back on Sunset near Cahuenga, and we see a line of war protesters, wrapped in blankets and sitting on lawn chairs along the sidewalk. In a silent vigil, they burn red votive candles and hold placards: "NO TO WAR...NO BLOOD FOR OIL." We don't like these people any more than we like the war hawks. For us, mass murder isn't the problem—self-righteousness is.

BOULEVARD OF BROKEN BONES

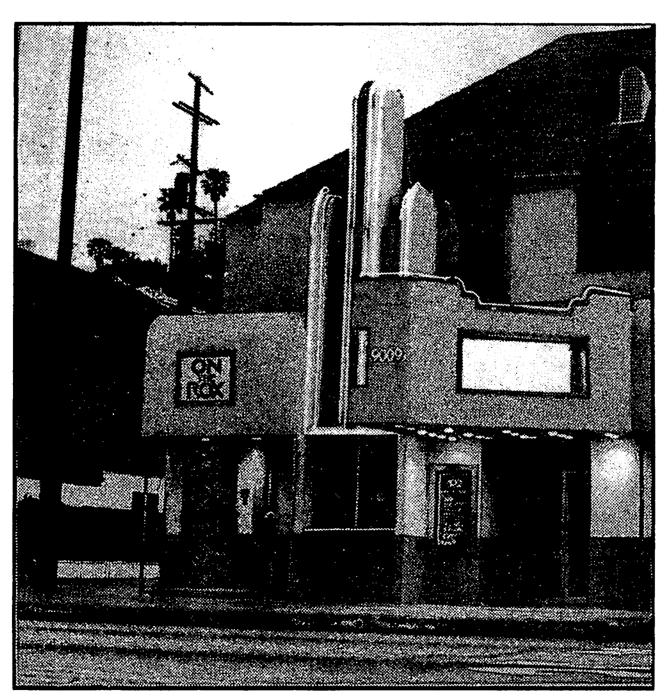
Cries of "Dude! Dude!" are heard west of La Brea, muffled by the sound of caterwauling metal singers. Bikers roar by with Hammer of the Gods engines. Alice Cooper replicants hail cabs.

We park on the Strip at **11:03 PM**. The sidewalk is a swamp of hairspray and patchouli. I'm 100% amped, my teeth clenched, caffeine charging through my veins. I'm the only male without shoulder-length hair and feel like a narc. We walk past Gazzarri's, then the Roxy, then the Whisky, each of which thumps with generometal.

The Strip brings acne to Los Angeles. A long-haired youngster croons a Doors song recorded before he was born: "I slip in-to un-con-scious-ness...." Another stands with a live boa constrictor around his neck, saying, "I listen to everything except rap." Sixteen-year-old males are dressed in Edwardian ruffles and striped flares. The girls favor minimalist lingerie and platforms so high it looks like they're being humped while they walk. Some of them have barely pubesced.

The primary determinant of social status here is the concert flyer. Bands with names such as Hung Jury, King Size, and Legs Up patrol the Strip, deciding who's worthy of attending their show. It's a delicate game—just as someone can withhold a flyer, someone can hand it back or trample it beneath their snakeskin boots. To stand out, bands use gimmicks: One glues condoms onto their flyers, while another escorts their lead singer in a straitjacket and chains. The night's most popular handout comes from two women in microscopic G-strings. No males refuse.

Poetry rises from the streets, so lilting, so beautifully lyrical,



The Roxy, swept clean after the riot. At the entrance to the Rainbow's parking lot, left, we almost became amputees.

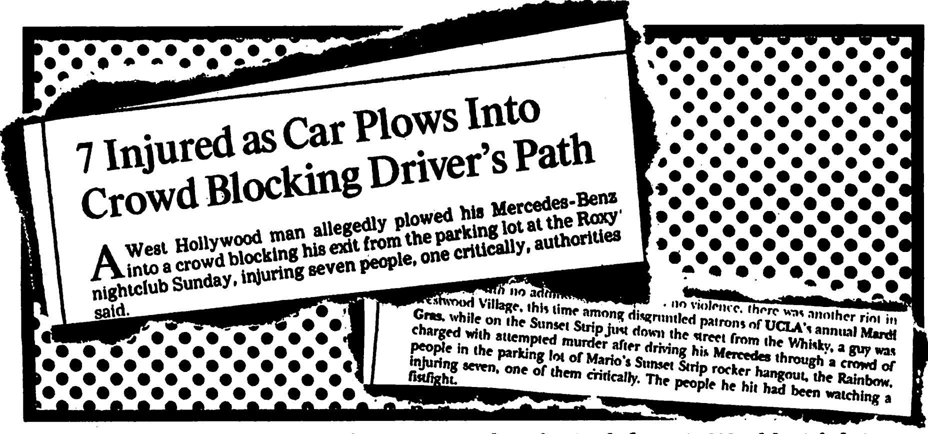
we're printing it verbatim in the order it was heard:

"My dog means more to me than life itself."
"Come here! I *love* floppy velvet hats!"
"He's a sucker. He doesn't want your body; he wants *you.*"
"That's why we're so karmically joined. I knew that when I first met you."
"Those kind of women are *asking* to get raped."
"MAMA!"
"I did all my teeth work myself."
"Show us your breasts, and we can do a demo!"
"I am *so* buzzed."
"I just need the chance to get a hand job. Otherwise, I might kill somebody."
"I love you! I love you! I'll eat your pussy!"
"I want my whip back."
"I was gonna wear my handcuffs, too."
"S&M intrigues me."
"How many guys here *don't* like a six-foot chick with big tits and blonde hair?"
"There's something missing, and I think it's your dick."
"I swear I sucked his dick so bad."
"All I wanna do is have good sex tonight."
"Dude, I'm so fuckin' burnt."
"Just because I have sex with you doesn't mean I wanna be your girlfriend."
"I hear you fuck dead people, man. My mom died five years ago!"

For those who can't get sex, violence is the drug of choice. Drunk, homely dudes discuss how they should pick one guy out of the crowd and jump him, just "bear down" on him. Anti-black slurs spill forth with surprising frequency.

It's just past **2 AM**, and the clubs are kicking everyone onto the street. We push into a crowd hanging in a parking lot between the Roxy and the Rainbow. "Lots of people didn't score tonight," I tell my sweetheart. "They're going to be sloshed, horny, and desperate. That's a dangerous combo. If anything's going to happen, it'll happen now."

It happens. A whipped-cream-colored Mercedes crawls from the parking lot's rear, edging up toward the sidewalk, hoping to find a break in the throng. No such luck—the exit is jammed with bodies. A smashed blond guy walks up to the Mercedes and begins playing with its coveted hood ornament. From the car's passenger's side springs a metal dude in a red T-shirt, about six-foot-two with scarecrow black hair. He wears black eyeliner and red lipstick. Maybe one day he'll play Tommy Lee in *The*



7 Injured as Car Plows Into Crowd Blocking Driver's Path

A West Hollywood man allegedly plowed his Mercedes-Benz into a crowd blocking his exit from the parking lot at the Roxy nightclub Sunday, injuring seven people, one critically, authorities said.

...with no add... ...no violence, there was another riot in ...estwood Village, this time among disgruntled patrons of UCLA's annual Mardi Gras, while on the Sunset Strip just down the street from the Whisky, a guy was charged with attempted murder after driving his Mercedes through a crowd of people in the parking lot of Mario's Sunset Strip rocker hangout, the Rainbow, injuring seven, one of them critically. The people he hit had been watching a fistfight.

Local newspapers cover the riot: **Los Angeles Times *(left)*; L.A. Weekly *(right)*.**

Mötley Crüe Story. He gallops around to the front of the Mercedes and shoves the hood-ornament molester, who lifts his hands in immediate surrender and hurries away. The red scarecrow gets back into the Mercedes, then leaps out, picking a fight with another unwilling victim. A security guard in a starched white shirt and bow tie is getting pissed. *He*'s willing to fight the red scarecrow, and their exaggerated fisticuffs pour onto the Boulevard. Bouncers and other security guards get in the middle, temporarily stopping the fight. The bow-tie guy comes from nowhere and cracks the red scarecrow in the jaw. Cars stop on both sides of the Strip. It develops into a belt fight, the metal man vainly swinging his stylish leather accessory at Mr. Bow Tie. The Mercedes driver, probably afraid his buddy would get his ass stomped, does a really stupid thing. I mean, astronomically stupid. With, say, fifteen people directly blocking his path onto Sunset, he slams the accelerator and runs right through them, cutting straight across the Strip, the sound of cracking bones piercing the cold night. He pins one unlucky soul into the door of a cab. We had been standing about two feet from getting slammed ourselves, my kneecaps a mere twenty-four inches from being crushed by the grill.

The crowd is electric. Stunned for maybe half a second, it erupts in communal tumult a la *The Day of the Locust*, storming toward the Mercedes, which is now stuck on the pavement across Sunset. They jump on the hood, kicking at the windshield and door windows, yanking on the doors, pulling out the driver and proceeding to clobber the shit out of him. They smother the red scarecrow, too, holding his hair and kicking his face. Women scream. Bouncers tear people off the red scarecrow, who breaks free and runs up toward Gazzarri's, a lynch mob nipping at his heels. They catch him again, punching him anew, and a security guard commands, "STOP! The man's had enough." The red scarecrow's girlfriend scoops up her wobbly lover, hissing, "Fuck you! Fuck you!" to some Latinos who scream, "This is the dude who started it all!"

Sheriff's cars and ambulances arrive with unholy wails. They arrest the noodle-limp Mercedes driver. People lie moaning on the concrete, ambulance workers hooking them up to intravenous bottles. The red scarecrow's girlfriend escorts her lover boy down an alley, away from the numbers, far from the scene of impact. Two short, muscular black dudes start waving their arms and shouting, "He's getting away! The motherfucker who started it is getting away! There's no justice! There's no fuckin' justice!" A smirking sheriff's deputy tries to stare them down. "You scared of me!" yells one of the blacks. "You afraid of me! That's why you need that billy club!" Here's justice in America: While the red scarecrow (the asshole who instigated everything) is getting away, the sweaty sheriff handcuffs one of the black guys for interfering with the police and throws him in the backseat of a squad car.

The crowd seems sobered, expunged of its sexual tension. The carnage cut through the previous three hours' bullshit posturing. A group of white kids take the black arrestee's name, address, and phone number, offering to help get him out of jail. Another white guy walks by, shaking his head and muttering, "It's too racial, man. It's too racial." We see the singer of "I slip into unconsciousness." He looks plenty conscious. Even *we* feel a little bad that we'd been praying for violence earlier in the day. The heretofore invisible "good side" of everyone was manifested by a common enemy, that evil bastard in the Mercedes and his escaped partner. All day we saw yellow ribbons, so I guess it fits that at night we see yellow tape.

The cops force everyone to leave at

3:15 AM. Seven people were injured. The eighteen-year-old who was pinned to the cab was admitted into intensive care at Cedars-Sinai with a lacerated liver. The Mercedes driver was booked without bail on suspicion of attempted murder. L.A.'s print media limited mention of this story to small newspaper blurbs (see box). TV news focused instead on the riot in Westwood, which hurt fewer people but damaged more property. The tube showed rioting blacks and Hispanics, not the spoiled Valley kids who flock to the Strip.

AFTERBURN

3:46 AM. The night is newly creepy and morbid. I'm wired on adrenaline, more awake than I was ten hours ago. Whoever's on the road is psychotic, including us. We love everybody. No hassles, please. Non-alcoholic D.T.'s roll over my body. We're not hallucinating, but we hear a rattle like somebody's tapping on the trunk. There's no way in hell I'll open it. Just the sight of someone's face would scare the living shit out of us.

We reach Riggin's dead end again. We've seen no other cars for miles. Dark. Dismal. Shit—our eyes are playing tricks on us. We thought we had reached the end, my only friend, but it's a few more blocks.

Everything assumes a fairy-tale look, a little too magical for comfort. The traffic lights melt into Christmas greens and reds. My brain must look like a glazed donut. Our bones ache, but at least they're intact. We pass a hitchhiker near a white neon cross but decide that picking him up would be answering an invitation to death. The sky is haunted, a purplish smear. It was not a good night. It was not a safe night.

For breakfast it's Denny's, that epitome of pasteurized Americulture. We eat healthy: brownie-fudge sundaes and two coffees each, making the daily java total nine cups per person. I'm dislocated: Though I know we're deep in Hollywood, I keep thinking we're in an industrial zone east of downtown. Street lights are turning off as the sky changes from violet to eggshell out the window.

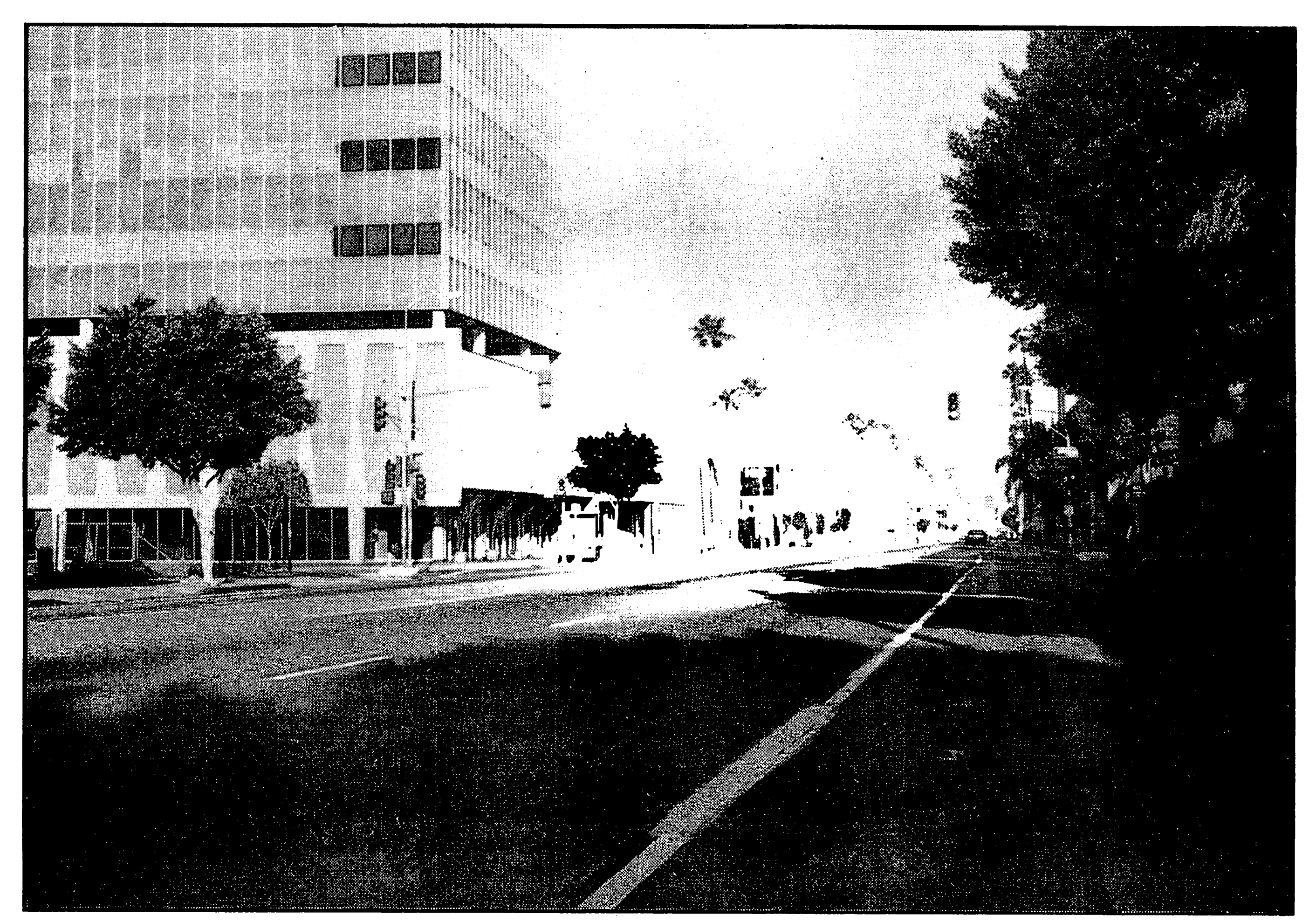
Porcine, clean-shaven men sit at a booth next to ours wearing T-shirts emblazoned with OFFICIAL DESERT STORM VENDOR. They gobble their troughs of potatoes and eggs, pausing to make sport of a homeless black man pushing a supermarket cart outside: "Two-car family, huh? Heh, heh!" In unison, they bite into their shriveled little sausages. One of the men, a Bob Hope look-alike who probably hasn't had a hard-on since Vietnam, grows impatient with an Oriental waiter.

Time to show some steel. He slides his guts out from under the table and walks over to the frail waiter.

"I can't wait anymore," he says. "I want some coffee."

"I'll be with you in a minute, sir," says the waiter, flustered with an abundance of customers.

The Bob Hope guy places his hairy hand on the waiter's shoulder and threatens, "LOOK—I want some coffee." The waiter scuttles away obediently as Ol' Ski Nose waddles back to his booth in triumph,



Sunday sunrise on Sunset: a peaceful city, if only for a sliver of time.

lifting his pants over his girth. We're number one again! Ain't Amurrrika wonderful?

At **5:41 AM** we get back to the Strip, an Armageddon of crumpled concert flyers. The yellow police tape has disappeared up at the riot scene. So has any physical sign of the madness that went down only two-and-a-half hours earlier. Even the flyers have been swept away in front of the Roxy. It's Sunday-morning peaceful. As the joggers start their daily rounds, they have no way of knowing that bodies got bulldozed last night.

BAD DRIVERS AND HOS

Anyone who thinks that people have redeeming qualities should spend twenty-four hours driving among them. From six minutes into our journey until we dropped off the car, we were continually swerving out of the way of others' willful negligence. I complained of eleven near-misses on the microcassette, and I'm sure there were that many more unmentioned. After nearly killing us, many drivers laughed at our gestures of consternation. Their eyes would be bloodshot with rage if someone cut *them* off, but they're incapable of seeing any wrong within themselves.

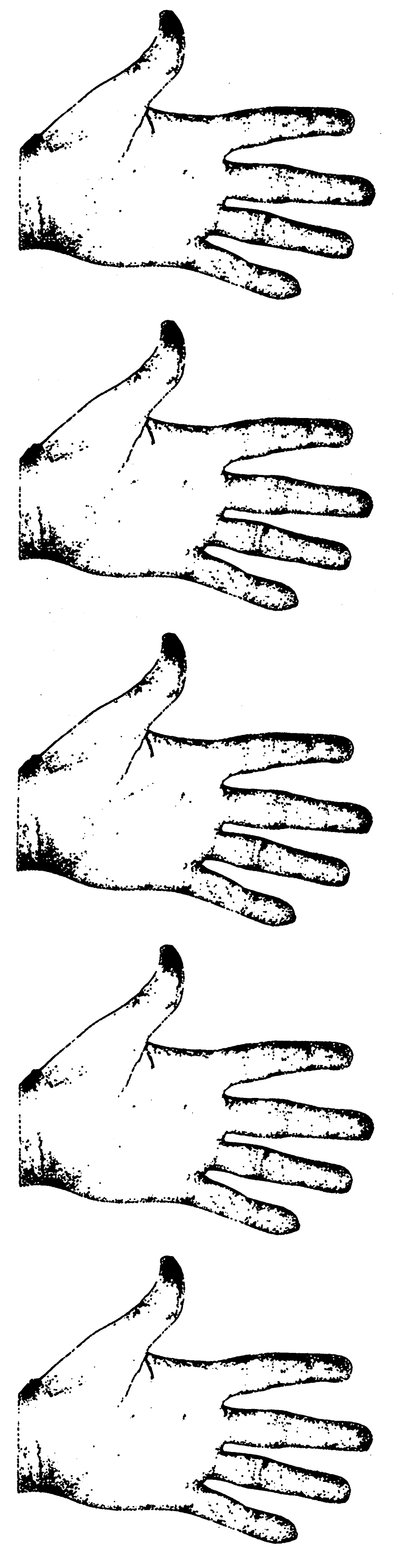
And there are so *many* of you unrepentant pigs out there, it's hard to choose who's the worst. Bus drivers, cops, and parking police displayed their typically horrid road etiquette, but I think old men win the prize. You know why? Because their balls are sagging, their sperm's dried up, and their wives beat them. So they drive with testicular abandon, captains of a two-ton metallic prick. Behind the wheel is the only place where most people feel powerful, and power corrupts.

To flee from the corruption, we park at Union Station and walk inside at **6:21 AM**. It's mammoth and empty, a deserted cathedral. An industrial hum pervades. Pigeons walk lightly on the stone floors. We see only two other people, crashed on separate cushioned chairs. We walk to the train depot's other end and sink into two vinyl-covered thrones of foam. I float, the resin of five joints clogging my brain.

Can't sleep. Can't cheat. I bound up and slam through the smudged steel doors of the men's room. It's filled with living humans in various states of decay. There's an all-swallowing, Satan's-rectum, membrane-peeling smell. I realize why we first moved to L.A.—cars give you distance from people.

Outside, the sky isn't blue, it's white. Numb, we drive to the beach, our third visit. We flip a U-ber and head east. I wonder what I'll feel like when I take off my sneakers. We're like stone-cold fucking junkies. We need to shit. We've had enough. We get the point. People are worthless. A black hooker we encountered before dawn summarized it perfectly: "What, you go around the block to see *hos*? Well, you saw 'em!" Everyone's a ho. We want to go home and double-lock the doors.

It's strange to see day, then night, then day again without sleep. Everything seems naked. We drop off the Probe at **8:48 AM** and take a silent cab ride home. I'm so out of it, I don't discover I still have the Probe's keys until I undress. I slap on my clothes and call the rent-a-car clerk, a different employee than the snob we dealt with yesterday. He's considerate enough to send a driver to pick up the keys. He could've been a dick and demand that we return them ourselves. After twenty-four hours, a shred of decency. A nice person. We're too tired to care. ■



Go FUCK Yourself

MASTURBATION IN LITERARY HISTORY

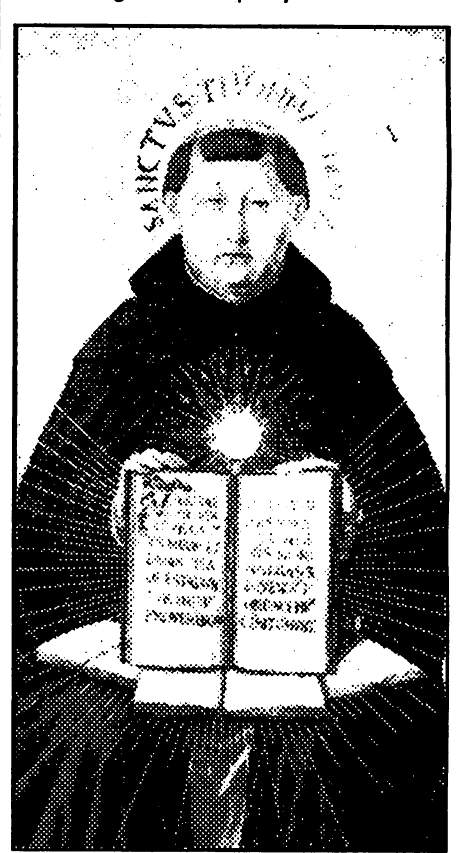
"Jerkin' off." Are there any words sweeter than these? The act itself gives rise (no pun intended) to many imaginative gerund-noun combos, such as "scrubbing the cucumber," "strangling the sandworm," and "polishing the bedpost." But whence ariseth the word 'masturbation?' Etymologists quibble over its origin: The Greek *mezea* means 'genitals,' but the Latin *manus* (hand) wraps quite snugly around *turbo* (to agitate). Roget's Thesaurus lists several synonyms, ranging from the sleek and sporty (autoeroticism) to the innocent-sounding (playing with oneself) to the undisputed king, a term so brilliantly guilty that both Jews and Catholics use it, "self-abuse."

Yet allusions to masturbation aren't confined to dry reference books. World literature spurts forth in thick, rude dollops of masturbatory data. Next time you're in a scummy motel room, steal a Gideon's Bible. It comes (not a pun, either) in the King James Version, *definitely* the most sexually repressed of all Bible translations. Turn to Genesis, chapter 38, and read about Judah, who had a habit of going "in unto" his wife Shuah whenever he felt frisky. Shuah had three sons, the first of whom was "wicked," so God slew him. Judah ordered his second son, Onan, to screw his dead brother's wife so he could, y'know, "raise up seed to thy brother."

Here's where it gets hot: "Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that *he spilled it on the ground,* lest that he should give seed to his brother [emphasis added]." The Holy Scriptures don't specify whether or not Onan wiped it up with a napkin.

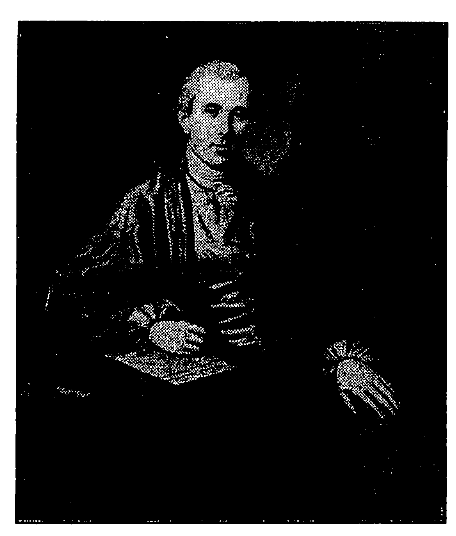
Some biblical scholars say that Onan preferred buttering his bialy to banging his sister-in-law; others say he merely pulled out early, aiming his goo at the floor. Fairly or not, many regard Onan's airborne wad as history's first recorded masturbation. 'Onanism' is a word in the dictionary; roughly, it means "squeezing the toothpaste." Anyway, God got pissed and slew Onan, too.

Compared to the Hebrews, other cultures' gods were party animals. One



Thomas Aquinas: too goddamned holy to jerk off.

Babylonian god "fertilized the fertile crescent" with only his hand and a hard-on. Egyptian mythology's Usiris formed the Nile with the "continuous manipulation and regurgitation of his gushing genitory," while Atum-Ra "frigged with his fist and



Benjamin Rush: said jerkin' off caused a cornucopia of ailments.

took the pleasure of emission." Now *those* are gods worth believing in.

People remember Diogenes as the Greek dude with a lamp, looking for an honest man. What they probably *don't* know is that he liked fingering his winkie in broad daylight, preferably in open marketplaces. Greco-Roman literature oozes with candid, unashamed references to self-stimulation. "I suffer, dear Donatus, from so frightful an erection, I am fearful for my penis," wrote Ramusius of Rimini in a tear-jerking letter to a friend. "Being wounded, my right hand can do nothing...."

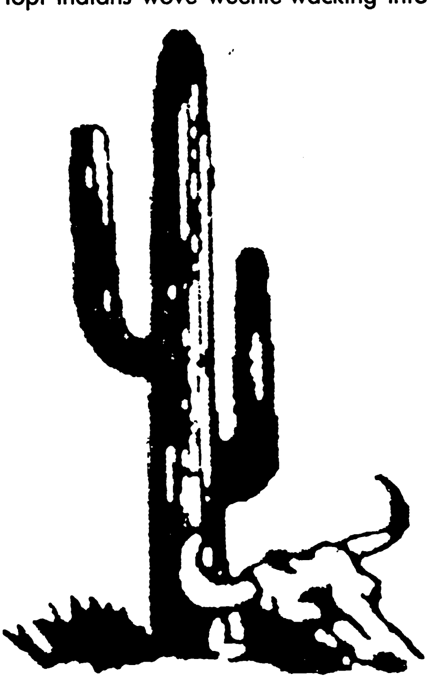
In the Middle Ages, Judaism's "Book of Splendor," the *Zohar*, called jerkin' off the worst possible sin. It claimed that ejaculated "seeds" allow evil spirits to incarnate themselves. Catholics likewise taught that every puddle of misfired cum was a wasted chance to fill the earth with more Catholics. Theologians from Augustine to Aquinas condemned it as a sin *contra naturam* (against nature). Tissot (1728-1797), a faithful papist, said it led to insanity, claiming that it forces a violent flow of blood into the brain. So *that's* why I've been getting those headaches.

During the 1800s, sexual ignorance spread like crab lice across Europe and the U.S. In the words of Benjamin Rush, a man who signed the Declaration of Independence *and* wrote about jerkin' off, it caused "seminal weakness, impotence, dysury, tabes dorsalis, syphilis, pulmonary consumption, dyspepsia, dimness of sight, vertigo, epilepsy, hypochondriasis, loss of memory, manalgia, fatuity, and death."

It was also thought to cause zits, foul breath, and (of course) corrupted morals. "It despoils the unfolding bud of perfume and beauty," wrote Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing in 1886's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, "and leaves behind only the coarse, animal desire for sexual satisfaction." Is this a bad thing or a good thing? Sigmund Freud wasn't sure, but he did know this—if you dream that you're playing an instrument or knitting...well, it's obvious.

Girls do it, too, a fact one nineteenth-century writer found "too horrible to contemplate." You might call the late 1800s the Golden Age of Female Masturbatory Creativity. The era throbs with accounts of women initiating friendships with coffee grinders and jacking themselves to the sound of marching troops. "Girls sometimes form a habit of handling their sexual organs because they find a certain pleasure in so doing," wrote Mary Wood-Allen and Sylvanus Stall in their helpfully titled 1897 tract, *What a Young Girl Ought to Know.* "It is called the solitary vice.... It leaves a mark upon the face so that those who are wise may know what the girl is doing....She will manifest an unnatural appetite, sometimes desiring mustard, pepper, vinegar, and spices." Mustarbation?

Native American gals were particularly resourceful, especially with cacti. The Apaches told of a frustrated woman who found more fulfillment with the prickly desert plant than with her husband. The Hopi Indians wove weenie-wacking into



The cactus: an Apache homewrecker.



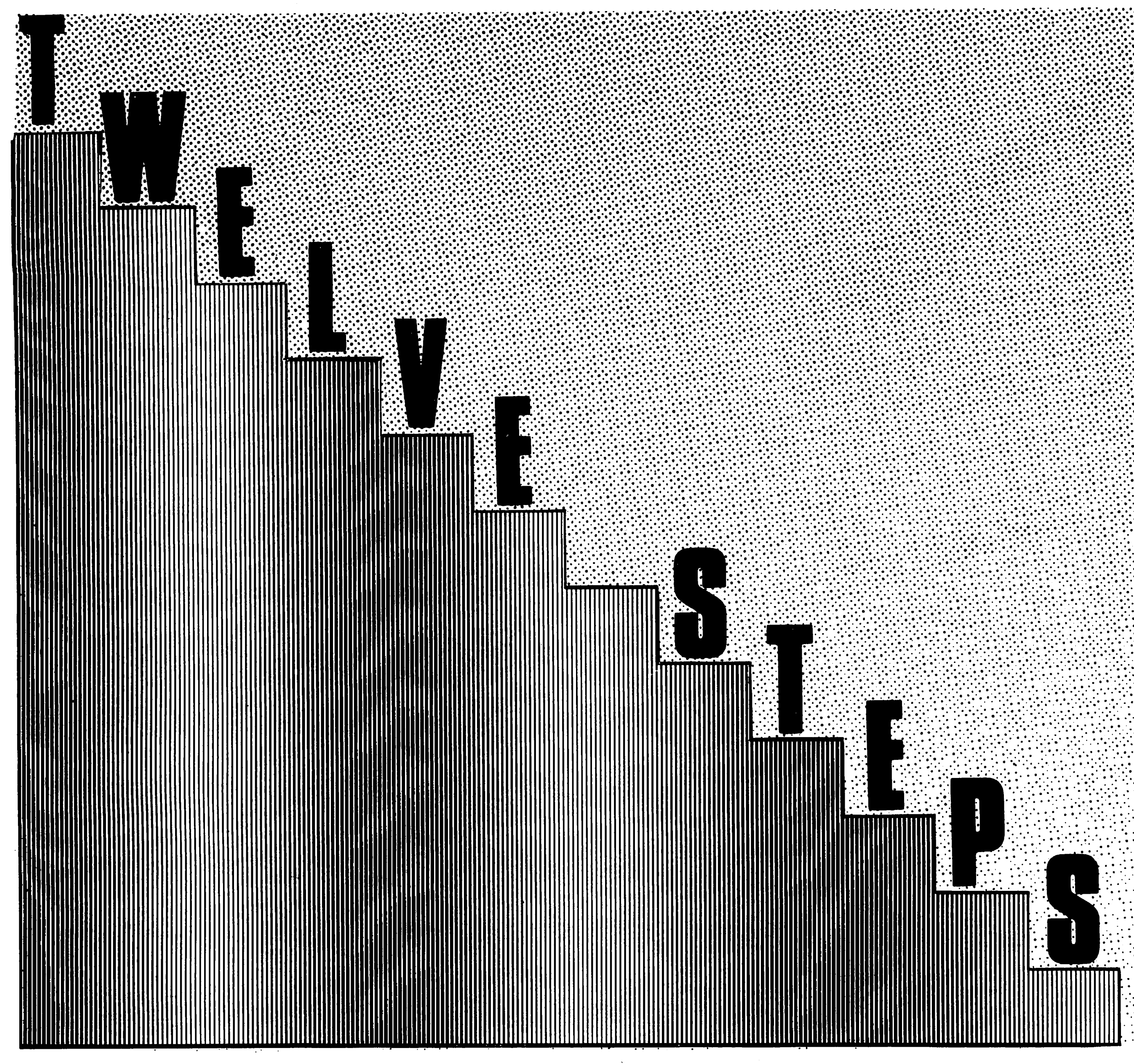
Sigmund Freud: "Get your hands offa that clarinet!"

their folklore, as revealed in this steamy passage: "When they became amorous they resorted to artificial means to satisfy themselves. The women used sticks and cactus, and the men used liver of deer and squashes and gourds."

But enough of nature. Society's grown up. We have home computers, beautiful missiles, and—best of all—ATM machines at the 7-11. Masturbation keeps pace with the bold new technologies:

> A geneticist living in Delft/
> Scientifically played with himself/
> And when he was done/
> He labeled it: *Son*/
> And filed him away on a shelf.
>
> —*Author unknown*

Hey—don't write off jerkin' off. For one thing, your hand isn't likely to leave you. It won't demand alimony payments. It eliminates everything that's lousy about romance: phone bills, restaurant tabs, and bullshit like flowers or weekend getaways. It also provides the cheapest, safest sex you can get. Go 'head, play some soft music, unzip your fly, and seduce yourself. Then fall asleep, hand at your side, and dream about knitting. ■



Are you an alcoholic, coke fiend, codependent, pothead, dope shooter, gambler, debtor, child abuser, agoraphobic, savings and loan victim, prostitute, survivor of suicide attempts or incest, tobacco junkie, overeater, or just an everyday obsessive-compulsive?

Well, your troubles have just begun. No matter what your affliction, there's a Twelve-Step group somewhere waiting to support you, stroke you, validate your feelings, and hug the shit out of you. All of the disorders listed above have engendered Twelve-Step programs and may herald the day when society has sympathy for victims of excessive tire wear, survivors of weak orgasms, and adult children of Rotary Club members.

Alcoholics Anonymous, the original Twelve-Step program, started with three sobered businessmen in 1935 Ohio. That nucleus has exploded, according to A.A. estimates, into eighty-eight thousand groups with two million adherents throughout a hundred and thirty-four countries. That's impressive, but not necessarily a validation: Both the bubonic plague and communism spread similarly. As with chemotherapy, the cure is often as bad as the disease. Twelve-Step programs are widely held as near-sacred and untouchable, so of course I'm gonna wipe my greasy, bony fingers all over 'em.

I'll admit that I loathe the lingo of pop psychology. If I run across another codependent from a dysfunctional family who's in recovery and is learning to process their issues and nurture the child within, I'll spit in their face. Get your nose out of your ass! Grow the fuck up! Grab a knife and stab the child within! But I feel this way because I'm in denial, right?

Twelve-Step programs have all the earmarks of an organized religion: an inspired group of founders which begat legions of uninspired followers, a main text (the ominously titled "Big Book"), a sacrament (checker-sized plastic chips), and liturgies which are read aloud at each meeting.

The Big Book tells the story of A.A.'s founders and hammers home the program's basic tenets. Paraphrased, the first three steps are: 1) Say that you have no power over your drinking; 2) Place your faith in some ethereal power; and 3) Submit your will to this power. The Big Book systematically debases any notion of individual empowerment and self-control:

> Any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.... The alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot.... The fact is that most



ANSWER Me! REFUSES TO GET WITH THE PROGRAM

alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink.... The actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge.... They were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control.... You can't win unless you try God's way.... Many alcoholics have concluded that in order to recover they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming "God-consciousness."... Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.

In place of communion wafers or the blood of a slain virgin, Twelve-Steppers celebrate their faith with "sobriety chips," which are given to those who've been on the wagon for specified intervals. In the film *Clean and Sober,* Michael Keaton reminisces about his first coke-free month after receiving a thirty-day chip:

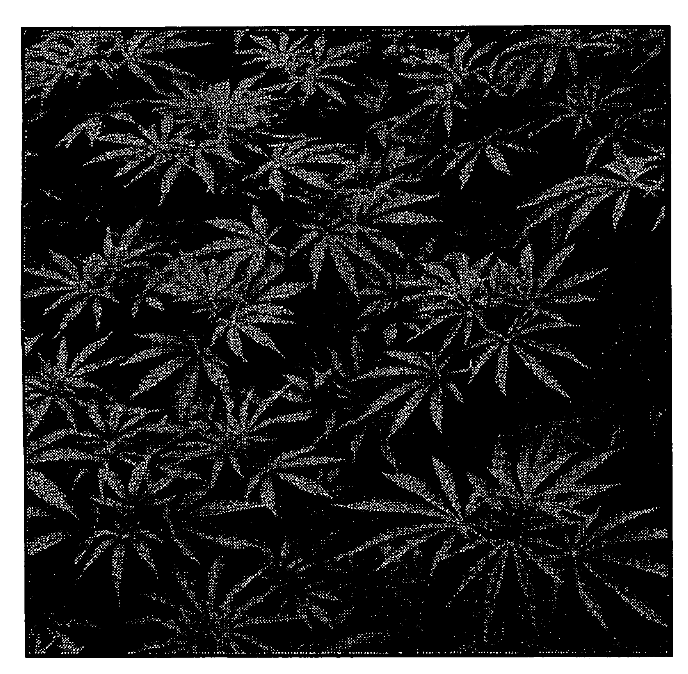
I've been to a funeral. I've been to about nine million job interviews. I'm fifty-two thousand dollars in debt. And I got this chip. I got this chip *[eyes become misty]*, and I've got the startling belief that I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict.

Hmm—in exchange for morbidity, repeated rejection, and fifty-two thousand bucks, I get a lil' plastic chip? How do I sign up?

MEETING #1: REEFER REMORSE

You'll find two things at almost every Twelve-Step meeting: unquestioning acceptance and steel vats of piping-hot coffee. The brown bean's aromatic nectar floats down a dusty church corridor. A cheerfully plump guy hands us styrofoam cups, and my wife and I tap into the dark liquid stimulant.

Slurping the free, legal addiction, we enter a sleepy Sunday-school room. Thick planks of sunshine illuminate dust particles and weather-beaten wooden floors. We sit on steel folding chairs which are



painted the standard dull beige. People mill around, hugging each other, nodding understandingly. It's a mix of sensitive guys and women on the edge of breakdown. Blacks in kufi hats share kind words with generic Caucasoids. It's the only place in L.A. where I've seen something approaching racial harmony, however forced. People who wouldn't make eye contact with me on the street look at me with twinkling expressions that say, "Hi! How ya doin'? Glad ya could make it!" We notice that one woman is staring at us with an open smile. "Are you guys first-timers?" she asks.

Uh, yep. She walks over to where we're sitting and hugs both of us. Yuck. "Keep coming back," she instructs us, skipping back to her seat. FLASH! Déjà vu. These folks remind me of the Jesus freaks from the seventies: hardcore ex-sleazeballs who've found a program of undiluted niceness. I half-expect them to roll their eyes back in their heads and start babbling in tongues. Collective brainwashing predates biblical times.

"Shhh!" whispers the group leader, a pepper-haired graduate of the Phil Donahue school of male submissiveness. "Ready? Welcome to the ——— meeting of Marijuana Anonymous. My name is Sarkis." (*ANSWER Me!* will substitute Arabic first names throughout the article.)

"HI, SARKIS!" shouts the group in unison.

"Hi.... Are there any newcomers in the group with less than thirty days of sobriety?" We raise our hands. "If so," Sarkis continues, "will you please stand up and give your names so that we can get to know you better?"

Trembling, my wife stands up. "Hi, my name is Debbie, and I've been free from marijuana for two weeks." (It was actually more like two hours.)

"HI, DEBBIE!" screams the crowd, which explodes into deafening hysteria, with several solo yelps of joy rising above the din. You'd think Debbie had discovered a cure for cancer.

I stand and kiss her forehead. "My name's Jim, and I'm a marijuana addict."

"HI, JIM!" More shrill applause.

Sarkis resumes reading from a handbook. "The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop using marijuana. There are no dues, no fees for membership. We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. We are not aligned with any sect, denomination, or political organization. We do not wish to engage in any controversy with the media. *[OOPS!]* We choose twelve steps to recovery because it has been proven that the Twelve-Step program works."

A woman is summoned to read from chapter five of the Big Book. "Hi, my name is Suad, and I'm a marijuana addict."

"HI, SUAD!" Clap, clap, clap. After she finishes reading, they clap again.

"Would anyone like to receive a welcome chip?" asks Sarkis, looking directly at us. What the hell? We accept more hugs and two lavender chips. On one side of the key chain-type device is the pyramidical, pseudo-Satanic M.A. logo. On the other side is the frightening command, KEEP COMING BACK. We realize that the crowd is quietly staring at us. Sarkis motions for us to stand and re-introduce ourselves.

"Hi, I'm Jim, and I'm a marijuana addict."

"HI, JIM!" The sound of forty hands clapping.

"Hi, I'm Debbie, and I'm an addict."

"HI, DEBBIE!" More palms slapping together.

"Thirty days?" asks Sarkis. Someone lifts his arm, the crowd applauds, and the thirty-day suckling is given a thirty-day chip. "Hi, my name is Zoroaster, and I'm an addict."

"HI, ZOROASTER!" Applause.

Another guy walks up and takes a chip. "I'm Khalil, and I'm a marijuana addict."

"HI, KHALIL!" Guess what? More applause.

"Uh, sixty days?" asks Sarkis. Someone raises his hand to more hoots and hollers, then walks up to receive the chip.

"I'm Telal, and I'm a marijuana addict, and, uh..."

"HI, TELAL! WHEE!"

The leader gives a small inspirational speech, which brings more applause. "Uh, ninety days?" he asks. Nothing. "Nine months?" A woman raises her hand to awestricken gasps and more clapping. Sarkis bestows upon her the special nine-month chip.

"Hi, I'm Nefertiti, and I'm a pot addict."

"HI, NEFERTITI!"

"I know that I still have a real problem," she says. The crowd loves this statement and gives her a special nine-month round of applause. Sarkis then turns the meeting over to the main speaker.

With gnarled locks of grey hair and bugged-out, worried eyes, the speaker introduces himself. "Hi, my name is Yacub, and I'm an addict."

"HI, YACUB!"

Like almost everyone else in the group, he says he was born in Brooklyn and claims he was an addict from birth. He discovered "grass" in his teens while listening to Hendrix. Is that a cliché or *what*? If you weren't a smoker, he didn't want to know you. He got married, but his wife left him, claiming that he resembled a "walrus with one tusk." (He always had a joint in his mouth.) He spent his vacation every year in Jamaica, mon.

"I was just going further and further into my addiction," he says, "not wanting to believe that I'd fallen into a trap.... I always thought I'd be smoking dope on a rocking chair when I was ninety years old." He says his brother had been shooting smack for twelve years but kicked it with the help of a recovery program. "Some



huge spiritual change just came over my brother and it was, like, for real. And it was really a fucking miracle." That's another thing about Twelve-Steppers: To lend their testimonies some gritty authenticity, they freely use words such as 'fuck' and 'shit,' just so you know they're not full of fucking shit. Then again, so do I, so what the fuck kind of shit am *I* talking about?

Yacub reveals that he always felt like he was wearing a green suit in a world of brown-suited people. To escape his feelings of inadequacy, he'd smoke himself "into oblivion." While sitting at home one night "feeling sorry" for himself, he torched a doobsker, nodded out, and awoke to find that his kitchen was on fire. That was the joint which broke the camel's back.

"I found what was really a miracle for me," he says, "was that all I had ever wanted in my whole life was just to feel like I belonged. You know, that I was loved. And when I walked into my first meeting, all I had to do was just say my name, and these people loved me." I know *I'd* feel good if people loved me for my name and not my attributes. My name's Jim. You love me, don'cha?

Instead of wantonly toking, Yacub now chats with the Lord. "I just get up in the morning and talk to God and say, 'Hey—I'm your soldier Yacub, you know, employed in your service.'" Other spiritual warriors shake their heads with empathy. "I just think that this program is the best deal in town," Yacub continues. "I mean, for a buck, you get a chance to have some group therapy and a chance to possibly see God." I scan the crowd from end to end but fail to see Him. Maybe God'll attend *next* week.

Yacub relinquishes the floor to Sarkis, who assigns someone to read the "Twelve Traditions" aloud. They're an entirely different deal than the Twelve Steps and end in the admonition that group members should place "principles before personalities." Like zombies, everyone chants these three words as they're read, applauding heartily at the concept of their vanquished individuality.



It's time for sharing. "I keep tasting acid. I keep tasting Quaaludes," says a wizened woman with bleached-blonde hair. She says that she's bankrupt. The IRS is on her ass. Her personal relationships are falling to pieces. "My automatic response," she says, "was, 'Go to a meeting, go to a meeting, go to a meeting.' [As you'll see later, they always seem to say it three times.]" Nothing like the cocoon of unreality when your life's fucked.

A woman with a black pompadour and a hawk nose talks about her resistance to group psychology, how she had to fight that impulse and go with the flock. I uncomfortably sense a negative narcissism, that these people enjoy laying guilt on themselves in front of others. She says that she was on a business trip and dodged a few meetings. This caused almost unbearable remorse. "I can't go seven to ten days without a meeting," she confesses. "I was wrong. I had an attitude." Heavens forfend!

Wearing a droopy pink gym suit, one woman's eyes twitch as she nervously rubs her hands together. Her sense of guilt is so strong, it manifests itself in physical symptoms. If you're easily shocked, you might want to stop reading now. Her pancreas-twisting self-hatred is easily understood. It seems that she had become lazy and was attending only *five meetings a week*. She had promised herself and God that she would "double up," i.e., go to *ten* meetings per week. She failed to follow through with her promise. Why, the cold-blooded, black-hearted, self-serving bitch!

After a moment of silent reflection, we all join hands and recite the Our Father. Following "Amen," everyone opens their eyes, clenches their hands tighter, and says, "KEEP COMING BACK, BECAUSE IT WORKS!"

The circle dissolves into loose socializing, with several individuals taking the time to tell us we've chosen the right path. Someone pops her head in the room and begs, "Can you *please* keep it down? There's a meeting going on in the next room."

MEETING #2: SNOW JOB

Another day, another church, another twelve steps to descend. Of all the addicts our wonderful world has to offer, I probably have the least sympathy for coke freaks. I call cocaine the "emperor's new drug," perfect for conformist achievers who can't trust themselves to achieve. Why people would blow their life's savings on a hyperinflated coffee buzz that doesn't alter their minds is beyond me. I don't quite *enjoy* heart murmurs and having my dick drained down to raisinlike proportions.

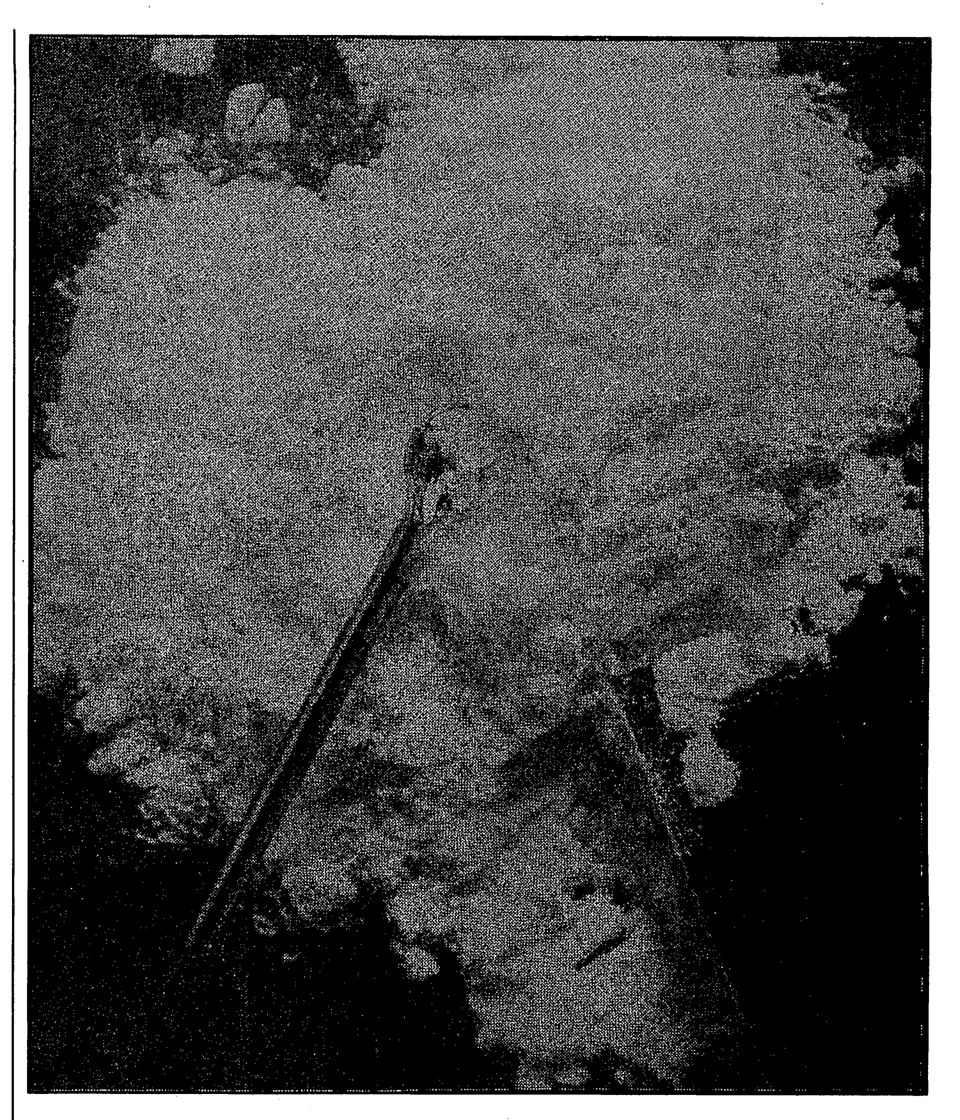
There are only four others besides us, and they're a tangled mess of frazzled ganglia, tapping their feet, blinking uncontrollably, and squirming in tiny chairs designed for kindergarteners. Their raging neurons are giving me a headache. I feel like strapping everyone down and pouring cold water on them.

Even though there are so few of us, the group leader keeps fucking up everyone's names. A hairy grizzly of a man, he uses the ultimate Twelve-Stepper's excuse: "I guess I haven't had my coffee yet.... Do you feel like leading a meeting?"

He's talking to me. I decline, so he hands me a laminated card and asks that I read from the Big Book's passage on the Twelve Steps, modified to replace 'alcohol' with 'cocaine.'

"Hi, my name is Jim, and I'm an addict."

"HI, JIM!"



HOW IT WORKS

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates.... Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over cocaine—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to cocaine addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Our leader begins to share a lil' bit of himself with us, his voice assuming the soft, muted tone that people of the psychotherapeutic ilk use to assure you they're not *really* a seething vessel of wretched hostility. He says he's in his mid-thirties, coming out of twenty-one years of addiction. "I'm just a fifteen-year-old scared little kid who needs love," he says. Well, don't look at *me*.

"Ya wake up and ya find yourself doing something fundamentally different than ya've ever done it before," he coos, "and it's all a result of just hanging around here, ya know, and letting recovery happen at the slow pace that it happens." He says he lost his job and is recently divorced, but he remains upbeat. "I went on an interview yesterday, and I didn't give the interviewer the power to hire me, because I had heard a recovery tape that if God is all-knowing and all-loving and all-present, then He has the power. And the only way ya can give somebody else the power is to *give* it to them. If ya know that they don't have the power and that God has the power for all these decisions, then ya just go in there and turn it over. And I did." I wouldn't have hired him just because he listens to recovery tapes.

The next guy to share wears shorts, sandals, and the look of the hunted that comes from prolonged stimulant abuse. He says he's back from a weekend vacation where he drove eleven hours up to California redwood country. "It was kinda nice," he says. "I was all wired up on

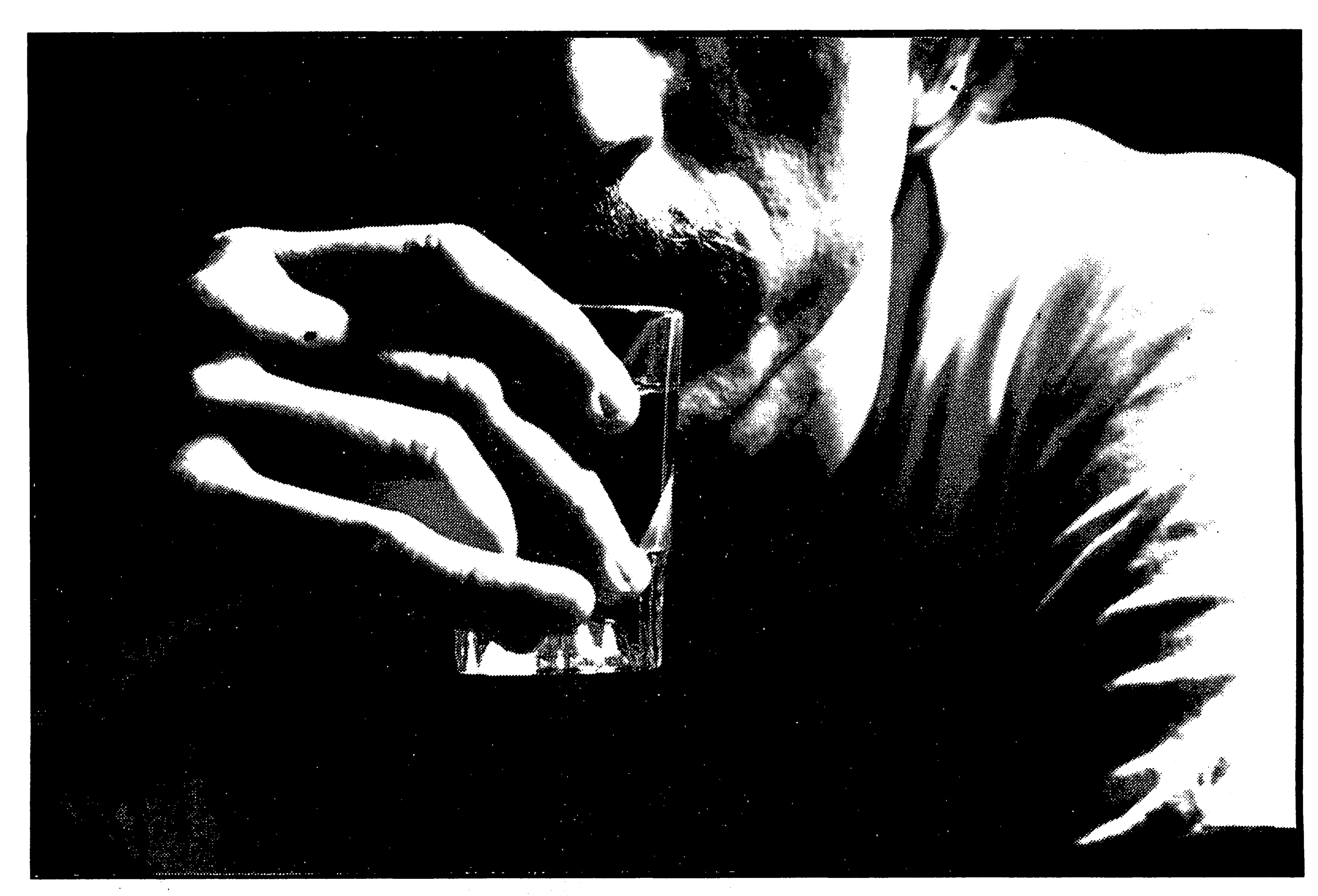
coffee. . . . I went back to the truck and it was hard for me to sleep, because I was just so sober. I went to some meetings up there. People are very open, and they're very into being sober. They're working their steps."

He's working them, too, stepping all over his ego, kicking it until it's bruised and nearly dead. Everyone in the program seems willing to talk about how horrible they used to be. "I'd smoke pot and do coke, smoke pot and do coke," he recalls, "just switchin' one addiction for another. First it's sex, then it's pot, then it's sex, then it's eating, then it's sex, then it's pot, then it's eating, and all these addictions just keep coming back. Why not just, 'Don't worry, be happy,' and just go on with life?" Sounds good, O thou one of damaged nerves, but why trade your previous addictions for enslavement to coffee and the program?

I'll tell you why. Because people like being slaves. The program demands that you smother your natural individualistic impulses and become a single cell within a free-floating, unthinking group jellyfish. The Big Book even quotes a neurologist who congratulates A.A. for encouraging the "herd instinct." *ANSWER Me!* believes that creativity never comes from collective thought, whether it be the establishment's consensus or that of the vaunted "counterculture." But most others aren't like us. They gather like lemmings and leap off cliffs in the name of the newest mass deception.

"Being sober is a great thing to be," continues the unwitting Nazi of positivity. "Do the steps, go over the program, come to the meetings. That's the way to be. You wanna control your attitude? Come to the meetings. You wanna learn something about life? Come to meetings. That's what the whole thing's about. You think meetings are stupid? I was two weeks sober before I came into meetings, and that's the whole





thing—I wanted sobriety, and I didn't want my attitude anymore. To control my attitude, I had to come to meetings. The guy I went with on this trip, he's a kid, he's like twenty years old, and he's got sixty days of sobriety. That's all we did—we just sat and talked about sobriety, and we read out of the Big Book. And it was kind of like a Bible study. But the thing is, the Bible tells you how to *work* on life, but the Big Book tells you how to deal with life on life's terms. And if you can relate to dealing with life on life's terms, that's the best way to be." Touché, but if you want to face life head-on, why the FUCK do you need a program, a Big Book, and a higher power?

I don't have time to ask, because the leader enjoins us to form a circle and recite the Our Father, which again ends with the "KEEP COMING BACK!" hand squeeze. The leader waddles up and hugs us with his sweaty bear's body. "People are really loving and open here," he tells us. "You can just go into any meeting anywhere and just be comfortable with it. It's real warm, real magical." *Magical?* I think to myself. *The more a person strains to be sincere, the more full of shit they become.*

Another ex-cokehead hugs us and says he's been to twenty-six meetings in the last fourteen days. He's planning to attend yet another one in a few hours. "I gotta keep going to meetings, going to meetings, going to meetings," he insists. "The meetings are all we have. The program is all we have."

MEETING #3: OF ALCOHOL AND GUYANESE KOOL-AID

This meeting's a giant alcoholic carnival of nearly two hundred persons. It's midday, but the women are in full makeup and boho club gear, fawning over stubbly guys with Christ-length hair. Buff biker dudes with ponytails charge across the room to hug women in rhinestone glasses and leopard jackets. I smell a meat market, as if all of Melrose Avenue had suddenly entered recovery.

We sit in the back row. Watching the hug-in, I consider how fragile such a conspiracy of belief is—in an instant it could fall apart or congeal into something far more dangerous. I'm sure that back in the seventies, most of those who joined up with Jim Jones and his People's Temple did so for what they thought were positive reasons. After a few years and more than a few lies, they were willfully sipping poisoned Kool-Aid and dropping like bird shit.

"I got to the program because somebody Twelve-Stepped me," says the female speaker, making her spiritual awakening sound oddly like a physical assault. "I think that's really important, because I would've never gotten here on my own. I didn't have the guts to stop. I would've died before I reached out my hand for someone." She delivers her words in an unwavering pitch reminiscent of the disembodied teacher's voice from Charlie Brown's classroom in *Peanuts*. "I got here," she says, "because there was no place for me to go anywhere else." The crowd chuckles knowingly. "I got out of bed and came to a meeting. It's a spiritual program. It was really important for me to learn that I was gonna have to find something bigger than you guys in this room to take my ass out of booze and drugs. And I decided to turn my life over to Him. I spent a lot of time lying to myself. A lot of time trying to be, you know, what my mom and dad wanted me to be, what my boyfriends wanted me to do, and what society wanted me to do."

Now she's got her shit straight—she's doing what a ***higher power she never met*** wants her to do. She says she wanted to be a rock star, but those weren't "God's plans" for her. In her drunken days of yore, she had been raped, mugged, and beaten, but now God's teaching her to "take responsibility." This is another thing I find annoying about the Twelve-Steppers: They're eager to guilt-trip about their

malodorous past deeds, even going so far as to blame themselves for things that couldn't have been their fault, such as being raped. But when it comes time to take credit for any *positive* action in their lives—POOF!—they had nuttin' to do with it. Blame the higher power for that one. It seems that their spiritual awakening consists of the realization that they can do nothing but wrong. People are usually so devoid of self-knowledge that when they get a little, they blow it out of proportion and lend it some cosmic significance.

The chip-giving ritual begins, and people respond to the tiny "APPLAUSE" and "HI, —!" signs flashing in their heads. Speeches follow in rapid succession, each a radical thematic departure from the previous one. Consider the diversity of opinion evidenced in the following spiels:

A) I just want everyone out there to keep coming to meetings. I like it a lot. I'm keeping with the program, and every day is one more. I keep coming back to A.A. meetings.

B) I keep going, going, going to meetings.

Isn't it great? The first keeps *coming* to meetings, while the second keeps *going* to meetings, and yet A.A. finds room for *both* of them!

We finally sniff the rarefied air which lies above the many levels of chipdom. A wedding-sized cake is carried out to honor those whose sobriety transcends mere days and months. A list of names is read, accompanied by the number of years it's been since each of them last boozed it up. The crowd joins together in song:

Happy birthday to you/
Happy birthday to you/
Happy birthday, dear A.A./
Happy birthday to you./
Keep com-ing baaaaaaack!

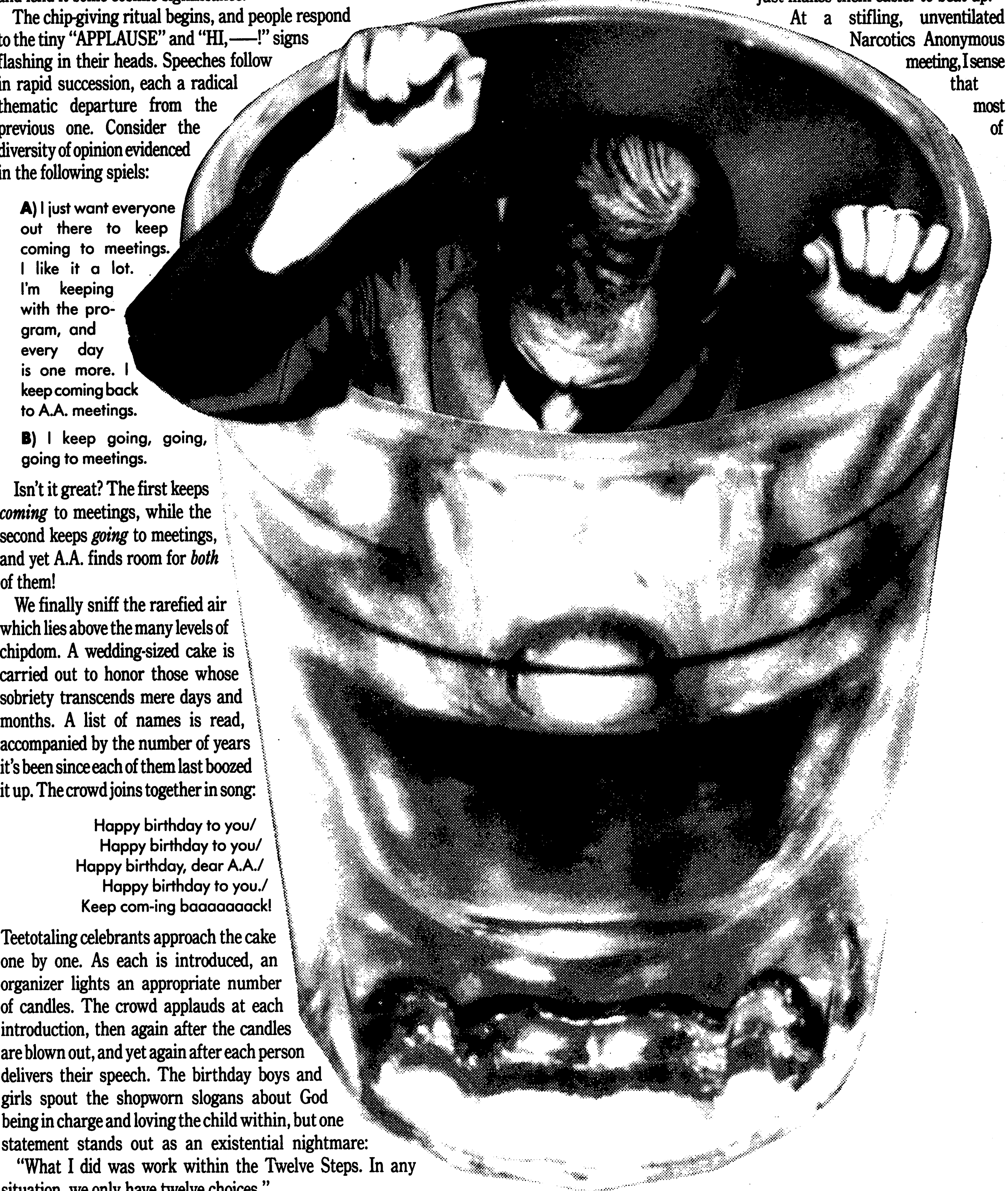
Teetotaling celebrants approach the cake one by one. As each is introduced, an organizer lights an appropriate number of candles. The crowd applauds at each introduction, then again after the candles are blown out, and yet again after each person delivers their speech. The birthday boys and girls spout the shopworn slogans about God being in charge and loving the child within, but one statement stands out as an existential nightmare:

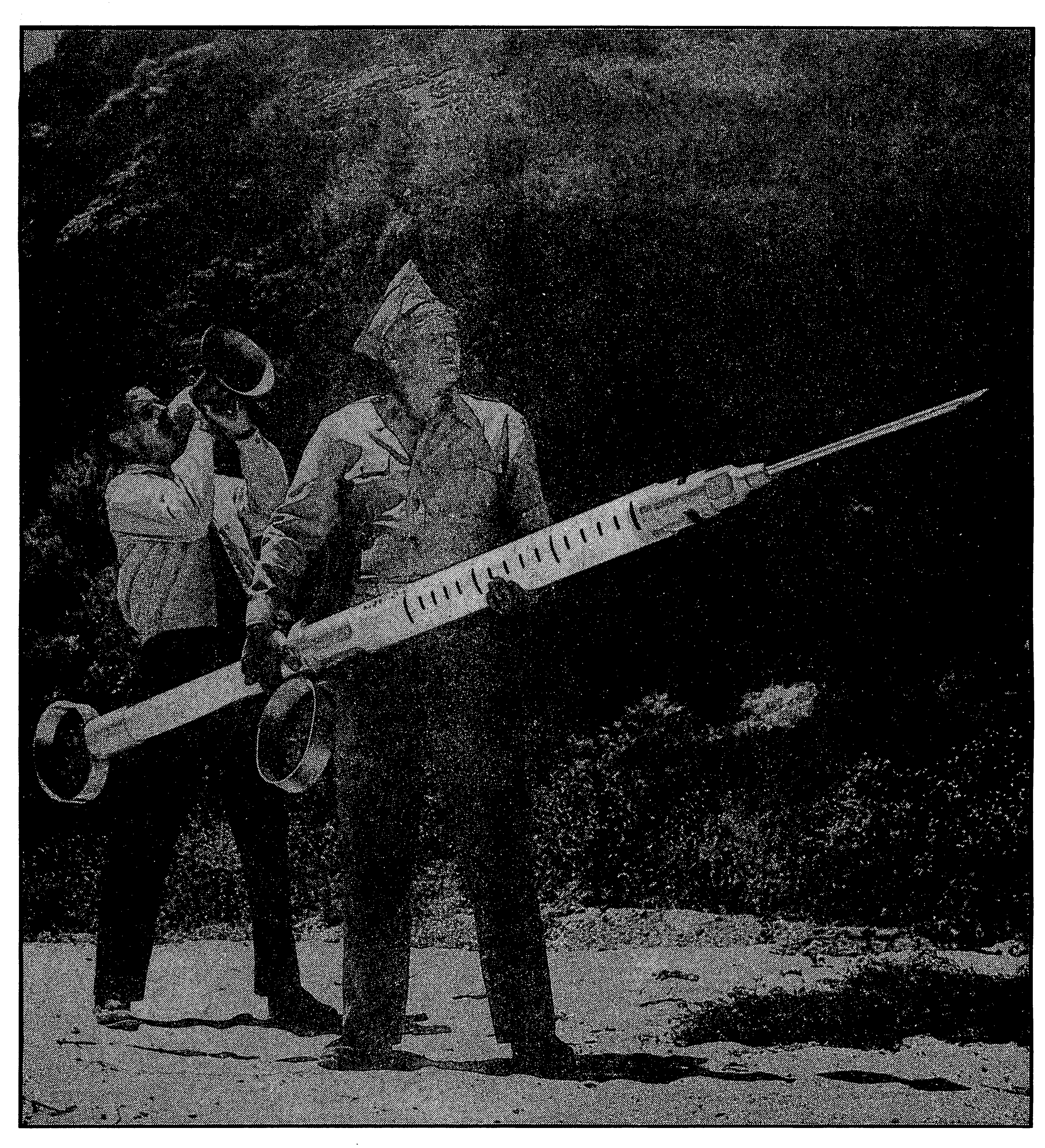
"What I did was work within the Twelve Steps. In any situation, we only have twelve choices."

MEETING #4: NARCOLEPSY

I guess heroin's cool if you want to look like Keith Richards or an extra in *Dawn of the Dead*. But in the AIDS era, anyone who bangs dope is a formaldehyde-preserved moron. *ANSWER Me!* believes in doing nothing halfway. Either live your life or end it. Don't stumble around using your wrist for an ashtray or scratching zits off your ass. People actually think that shit's romantic? Plenty of L.A. metalheads do, but it just makes them easier to beat up.

At a stifling, unventilated Narcotics Anonymous meeting, I sense that most of





these folks' brains are still swimming in a narco syrup. They're either stupid or brain-damaged, but it's the only group where people have trouble reading the literature aloud. One simian-faced oaf (let's call him "Anwar") reads an agonizing syllable at a time, stalling on complex words such as 'their,' 'terms,' 'enemy,' and 'methods.' He can't even *pronounce* 'significant' after repeated phoneticization by his cohorts. Another junk casualty reads a section from the Big Book, tripping over the words 'acceptable,' 'protective,' and 'substitute.' I vow that I'll never, *ever* take narcotics.

A ruddy, Kris Kringlish man is the guest speaker. He calls himself an "ex-drunk" who's been sober for thirty years—as long as I've been alive. I don't know why an alkie is at Narcotics Anonymous, but for some reason I trust him. That is, until he really starts talking.

"We have a common enemy," he says, "one great common enemy, and I'll tell you who it is—the name is 'You.' You are your own worst enemy. Remember—everything that has happened to you in your life, you caused it. Understand it—you cannot blame anybody for using or drinking. You made that decision. Nobody put a goddamned gun to your head and said, 'If you don't shoot this needle in you, we're gonna blow your brains out.' No. You did it because you wanted to. Understand that. You are the one that started your addiction. Nobody else. So don't blame your mother, your father, your wife—no human power made you what

you are today. You did it. Now, how do we solve that problem of 'You?' You have a choice—you can stop at any time you want. Most people have to go through a lot of living hell, all kinds of shit, before we realize and come to a point, 'Either I stop, or I don't stop and I'm gonna kill myself.' All alcoholics at one time or another, or addicts at one time or another, wanted to do away with themselves, because that's the other enemy—you. You hate you. You can't get along with you. Nobody understands you. That's why you fight with you.... Ego will kill you." Silly me—here I was, thinking it was the main component of my survival.

The meeting unravels into a discussion of the Twelve Steps that perhaps only a numerologist would find worthwhile. "The only time another human being comes into your existence is step five, and that's the only time," says the sober Santa Claus. "Six and seven—you wanna know something? Three and four is your whole goddamned program. Follow me, if you know this program. After you pass five, five goes back to three. Eight goes back to four. Nine goes back to four. Ten goes back to four. Eleven goes back to three, and twelve goes back to three. There's your program." Yeah, but what if six was nine? Wouldn't you mind?

A woman speaks up. "The Big Book tells me that if the third step is not immediately followed up at once by steps four and five, it has little or no permanent effect. How do you feel about that?"

"Well," answers the overweight cherub, "number three is, once you have found a power greater than yourself, then you have to make a decision to turn your power over. Now, that's strictly you and God. The fourth step then becomes you and you and you. And the fifth one is, like, you and somebody else *and* God. Does that make sense to you?"

Amazingly, it does. "How do you Twelve-Step?" asks another.

"Well, Twelve-Stepping's entirely different to me. I still Twelve-Step," he says. I still do the Mashed Potato, but that's between me and God.

Instead of joining hands and saying the Our Father, we lock arms in a circular hug and recite the Serenity Prayer:

> God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen. KEEP COMING BACK! IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT! YEAH!!!

There's a final announcement from Anwar, the *Sesame Street*-level reader, as the group disperses. "Hi, I'm Anwar, and I'm your secretary."

"HI, ANWAR!"

He grimaces. "I mean, I'm your *treasurer!*" This guy fucks up *everything.* The group laughs forgivingly as he pops himself in the head with an "I couldá had a V-8" move. Anwar finally laughs, too. "I'm in recovery, alright?"

ANSWER Me!'s TWELVE STEPS

It's not my intention to make fun of people's pain, just their seeming inability to get their shit together without social or spiritual crutches. I consider all of these people better off now than when they were guzzling, snorting, or slamming spikes into their arms. I know firsthand that alcohol is a MOTHERFUCKER. It causes people to lose their inhibitions, and from my experience, I prefer them with their hang-ups. There's nothing I hate more than a grinning drunk leaning in my face. These slobs are said to be responsible for more than half of the fifty thousand or so yearly auto fatalities in the U.S. If one of you stewed creeps ever rams into *my* car, you'd better take me out entirely, because I won't wait for the cops to get there. I'll bash your brains in with a crowbar.

Whew! You know, I feel better. Why don't we all stand up, take a deep breath, and stretch? I'll wait....

OK? This is my main beef: In its wholesale degradation of individuality, the placement of "principles before personalities," the program decapitates the ego when it should be repairing it. A sense of powerlessness and avoiding responsibility is why most of these people became addicts in the first place. Instead of attacking the problem at its source, the program merely substitutes one addiction for another. Call it "positive powerlessness."

There's a distinction between healthy self-reliance and plain bull-headedness which the Twelve-Steppers fail to make. They view the human personality in extremes, both of them lousy. For them, it's either blind defiance or total submission. That's what *ANSWER Me!* calls a "fecal duality"—two shitty choices.

Twelve-Steppers make much of total honesty. If they were truly honest with themselves, they'd admit that when they pray to their "higher power," they're only talking to a mental projection. Their prayers never rise above the ceiling. If anyone wants to tell me with inalienable certainty that they've actually spoken with God, let me point the way to the nearest mental hospital.

The second problem, the need for group support, hinges on the first. The program gives an artificial structure (complete with slogans, communal meetings, and Twelve Commandments) to people who are too weak to structure their own lives. If you form a dependence on others,





you never learn to depend on yourself.

The group is also an unrealistic setting: Unconditional love and acceptance may feel good, but you'll never find it outside of the group's womb. There's a nascent movement called Rational Recovery. It's basically A.A. without the God angle. It doesn't eliminate the need for the group, but at least it gets rid of the higher power. That's a step in the right direction. Only eleven more to go.

"Yeah, Jimbo," you scoff, "you talk that talk, but can you walk that walk? It's easy to criticize, but have *you* ever kicked an addiction? If *you* ever had to go cold turkey, maybe your nuts wouldn't be swinging so low." Alright, asshole, you've twisted my arm. Since I wrote in the Statement of Intent that a journalist who doesn't reveal his background is a liar, you'll have to permit me some psychodrama.

My old man was a brutal alcoholic, the nastiest person I've ever known. His father, whom I never met, was said to be the town drunk of a small backwoods community in Vermont. I tasted the family's legacy of violence early on—my brother tells me that dear ol' dad punched mom in the stomach while she was pregnant with me. My sister says that only days after my newborn body was brought home from the delivery room, dad and one of my brothers got into a fight. An ashtray got smashed into someone's head, and the glass fragments fell into my crib. One of my earliest memories is of watching my sister hunched over the toilet, her mouth drip-drip-dripping blood into the bowl, each drop dissolved by the clear water. "You see this?" she cried at me. "This is what your father's all about."

I don't know how many times I came home to find the old bastard unconscious, sprawled out like a homicide victim on the living-room floor, in the basement, or in the back alley. When I was five, I watched him trembling as he read a newspaper. "Why are you shaking like that?" I asked, and it blew his mind. Embarrassed that his problem was obvious to a preschooler, he quit drinking.

Three years later, my deaf brother (dad's oldest son of three) was murdered while vacationing in Paris. The old man, perhaps ashamed that his genes had produced an imperfect son, had been especially cruel to him. I suppose dad's guilt was too much to handle. After returning from the funeral for a small gathering at our house, I remember walking into the kitchen to find my father at the table, a half-empty bottle of whisky in front of him.

He started boozing again full-tilt, and since my remaining siblings were married and gone, I became the whipping boy. On one Saturday afternoon when I was nine or ten, I had the misfortune of being home alone with him. Something random enraged him, and he chased me up and down the stairs, through every room in the house, until he caught me. He whacked me several times in the face, finally drawing blood. In my little litigious way, I spit red saliva onto a piece of loose-leaf paper, writing down the date and time of occurrence. I was ready to testify,

because I was certain that my mother would divorce him.

She never did. To this day, she denies that he ever mistreated any of her kids. In fact, when I was about twelve, she egged him on as he lashed at me with his belt for coming home late from school. That beating left zucchini-sized welts up and down my thighs, bruises so extensive that my legs were more purple than pink. The abuse didn't stop until I reached my late teens and decided to hit him back, knocking his ass on the floor and cracking his dentures in half.

He finally kicked his drinking habit on a detox farm, but it was too late. A lifetime of red meat and alcohol had given him colon cancer, and he died within his first year of sobriety. He was a hateful mofo even when sober, but the booze fueled his rage like gasoline on a stove top. Unless you've experienced full-blown alcoholism firsthand, trust me: It's a drunk thing—you wouldn't understand.

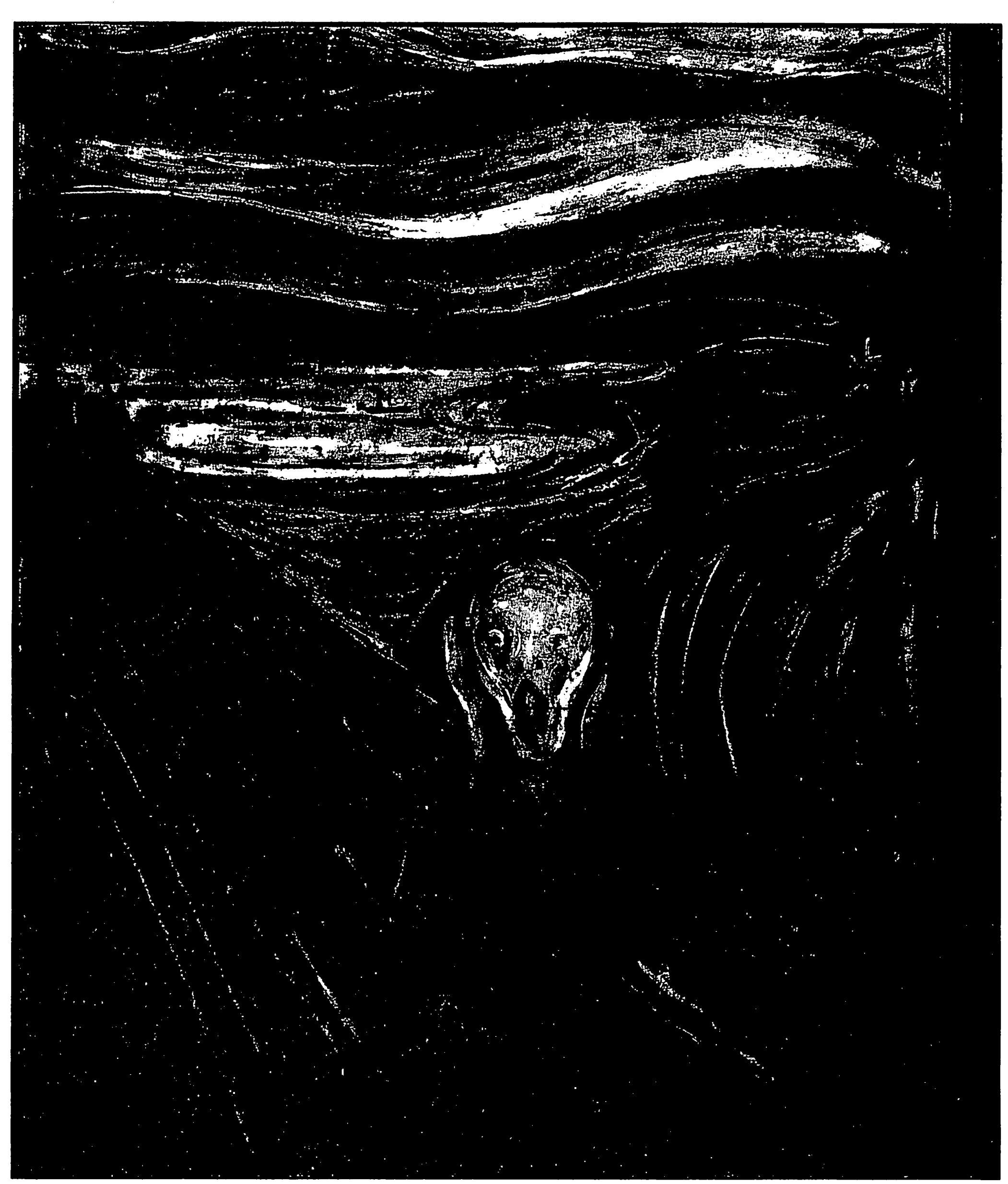
Statistics suggest that most alcoholics come from alcoholic families. By the time the old man croaked, I had discovered the fruit of the grape myself, and I was a mean drunk, too. I took to brawling with friends, enemies, strangers, and cops. After downing a fifth of cheap tequila and a quart of Colt 45, I fought with two policemen in suburban Philly. At least that's what *they* told me—I woke up in jail eight hours after the arrest, remembering nothing. I saw myself turning into my father and promptly quit. That was almost ten years ago, and I haven't had so much as a bite of rum cake since.

I continued using drugs, though, mainly weed and acid. The acid experience is redundant and too intense to be addictive, but my weed habit progressed from a weekly to a daily to a five-times-a-day ritual. I toked with zeal throughout most of *ANSWER Me!*'s production phase. (Check out *24 Hours on Sunset* or *Swallowed by Jersey.*) I was spending almost as much on weed as I was on rent. Besides being alarmed that I was smoking all of my discretionary income, I tired of hacking up tarlike gobs of resin and losing my train of thought in mid-sentence. Suffering from an abundance of self-esteem, I quit. At press time I've been completely sober for two months, and I'll never look back. So *there!*

No one taught me to respect myself. I grew up without role models. I reached inside and found that the higher power was me. Therefore, here are *ANSWER Me!*'s Twelve Steps:

1. We admitted that our addictions were fucking us up.
2. Came to believe that since we started them, only we could stop them.
3. Made a decision to follow our gut instincts *as we understood them.*
4. Didn't bullshit ourselves about our many flaws.
5. Having admitted our flaws, we kept them to ourselves—they're nobody else's business.
6. Were entirely ready to argue with anyone who disagreed.
7. Filled with self-respect, we did nothing humbly.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and realized that most of them deserved it.
9. Paid all our police fines, then burned all our bridges.
10. Continued to be ruthlessly honest with ourselves and admitted all our wrongs—to ourselves.
11. Trusted ourselves and only ourselves with what's best for us.
12. Having assumed full responsibility for our lives, we weren't foolish enough to try to change anyone else—first, it's a losing proposition, and second, we couldn't care less.

What saved me (besides practical considerations) was the act of banishing from my mind the idea that I needed my addictions. That's all. I don't need alcohol, I don't need dope, I don't need others' support, and I sure as fuck don't need a goddamned chip! ■



JONAH "GREASY" STUBB'S

TIPS ON TIPS

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Cabdrivers are the last untamed males on the North American continent. They're the angry, honest men who live outside the law, running two or three stop signs in a row without remorse. They're the self-made proles, the seething underclass with slick hair, taut sinews, and flabby tum-tums.

The cab is the last totem of American sexual potency. It is the ultimate phallus. What woman doesn't get wet at the sight of a man steering and braking, accelerating and belching? The cab is a shark with rubber wheels, skimming across wet city asphalt. On the front seat, a hairy arm leans toward the dash. A calloused finger activates the meter as the hack grunts, "Where ya headed?"

The cabbie's tumescent lips give directions to passersby while perching a cigar stub soaked with rabid froth. Watch, as a red-eyed stud smiles maniacally in the night, slams the accelerator, and slithers past a yellow light. Somewhere, brown sweat rolls from black stubble onto a tattered, donut-smeared flannel shirt.

It is with great interest, then, that we turn our attention to the recent rediscovery of *Tips on Tips: How to Stiff Your Customer,* a cabdriver's handbook written by the late Jonah "Greasy" Stubb. Once thought lost forever, the guide was issued to all drivers at the now-defunct Brown Spot Cab Company on January 6, 1969. The company operated out of a former Buddhist shrine and hot-dog stand in the South Bronx. Stubb's handbook achieved instant notoriety. On January 29, New York City's Public Utilities Commission banned it on the grounds of its "unethical orientation, lack of socially redeeming value, and unsettling honesty." Brown Spot folded soon thereafter. Mr. Stubb was later burned to death in a mysterious accident involving a cattle prod.

The handbook begins innocently enough:

> Welcome to Brown Spot. You are responsible for carrying our image into the community. Therefore, there will be no swearing, drinking, or fornication while on the job, not even with animals. All drivers are to report promptly at the beginning of their shifts to receive waybills and special assignments. If you are late for a shift, we may not have a cab for you. *(page 3)*

However, note the change of tone at the top of page 4:

> We here at Brown Spot realize our role as exploiters of uneducated working-class men. You represent a cheap source of labor and are easily replaceable. Since we demand, in cash, 90% of your meter intake, it's advisable that you learn some elementary methods of earning tips. (Not that we really give a shit whether your wife and baby starve.)

Page 5 deals mainly with the selection of appropriate 'jeff' caps and flannel shirts. Stubb then separates his "Tips on Tips" into four groups: Rules for Women, Rules for Old Ladies, Rules for Men, and Rules for Catholic Seminarians. Apparently, Stubb expected his drivers to earn tips through emotional terrorism, not cheerful service. The following passage is quoted verbatim from pp. 6-7:

RULES FOR WOMEN

1. Tell her she looks like someone you made love to fifteen minutes ago.
2. Ask her if she'd like to see your scars.
3. Ask her if she likes children and then raise your eyebrows up and down in the rearview mirror.
4. Insist she's a celebrity she doesn't remotely resemble.
5. Get her sympathy: Tell her your wife just left you for a short janitor named Pepe.

Even more execrable is Stubb's treatment of senior citizens:

RULES FOR OLD LADIES

These are the worst tippers. If you can scare the hell out of them, the floodgates will open.

1. Ask what her age is, then say she looks twenty years older.
2. Tell her you're a mulatto and see how she responds.
3. Tell her your vision isn't what it used to be, then swerve into the lane of oncoming traffic.
4. Tell her that Eskimos have a tradition of putting old people on ice floes and sending them off to sea.
5. As she enters the cab, say, "My God, what an awful hat!"

With Stubb's "Rules for Men," further evidence emerges of a pathologically cruel personality:

RULES FOR MEN

1. Insult your customer: He'll feel like a nebbish and tip better.
2. Disagree with everything he says, but compliment the way he smells.
3. Tell him about the dead body in the trunk that your partner forgot to remove.
4. Tell him he's not bad-looking for someone who's overweight and going bald.
5. Tell him he looks like someone you knew who had cancer and died a slow, agonizing death.
6. Joke around: Tell him it'll be $5.95 for mileage and $2.50 for putting up with his bullshit. More often than not, he'll pay it.
7. Tell him you worship Satan. Say, "You look like a run-of-the-mill, scum-sucking Christian to me—how'd you like to go to *hell*?"
8. Buy a rubber Indian Mohawk wig and a pair of mirrored sunglasses. When he enters the cab, turn around, grin, and say, "Welcome aboard the death train; you have passed the point of no return."

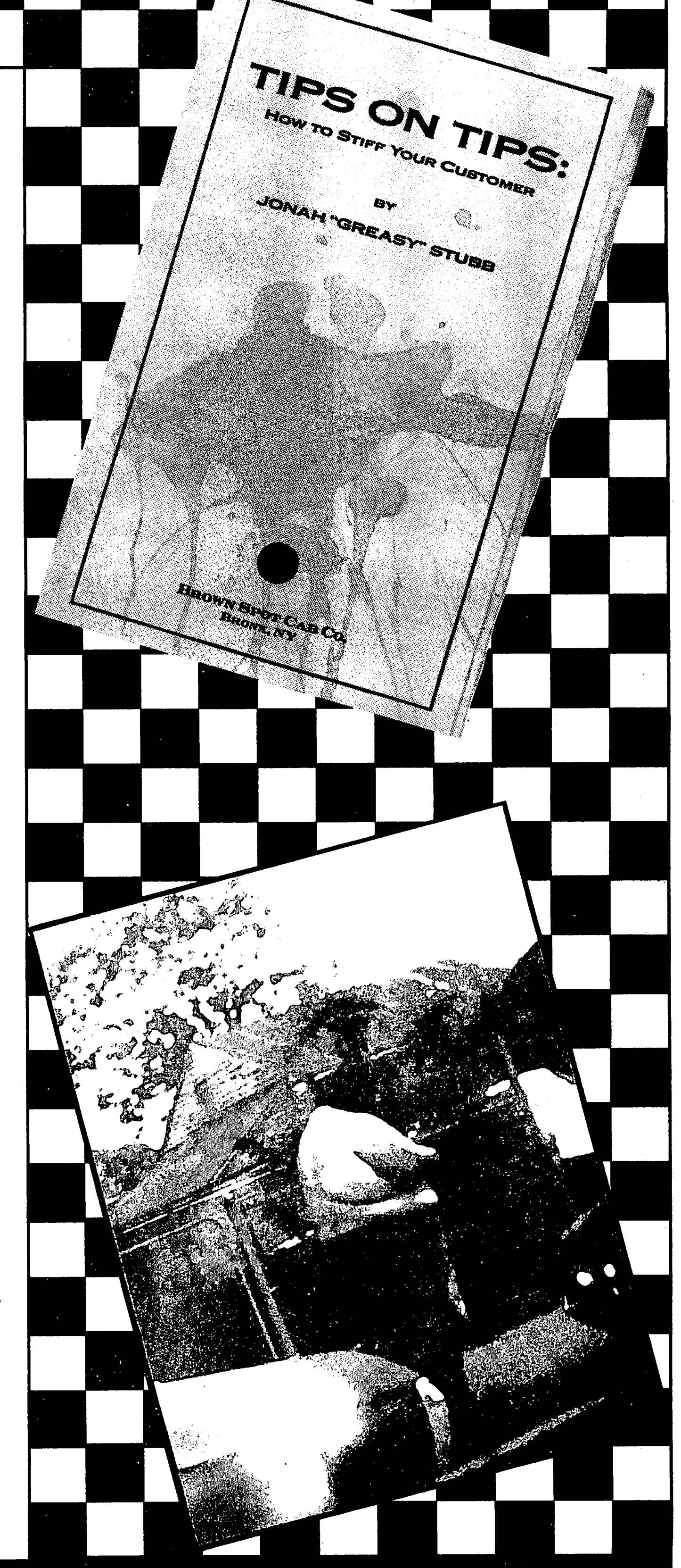
The inclusion of a final category, "Rules for Catholic Seminarians," is puzzling and was perhaps added as an afterthought. Historical psychologists have speculated that Stubb, a Catholic, may have left the seminary because there wasn't enough emphasis on punishment:

RULES FOR CATHOLIC SEMINARIANS

1. No matter where they want to go, take them to St. Patrick's Cathedral and challenge them to a boxing match on the steps.
2. Wire a statue of St. Christopher with explosives and place it on your dashboard. When the seminarians are comfortably seated, detonate the statue.
3. If the statue doesn't explode, rip it off the dash in a fit of rage, screaming, "Catholic seminarians—they're all the SAME!"

Stubb ends the handbook with a "Cabbie Prayer," an odd amalgam of the Our Father and a Burma Shave commercial.

Clearly, Stubb's is a work to be reckoned with. His syntactical precision and lucid style have been widely lauded in such works as *Toward a Better Bundt Cake* and *Modern Drapery: Is This the 'Decadence' of Which the Russians Speak?* However, it is not until one reads *Tips on Tips* that one can speak of Jonah "Greasy" Stubb as a writer of intrinsic power. In a field glutted with brilliant handbooks, Stubb has produced an archetype, for here we find not only shimmering prose and transcendent passion, but also a list of every public rest room in the greater metropolitan area. Stubb once remarked that he wanted to produce "a practical handbook for cabdrivers." You have done it, Mr. Stubb, you have done it! ■



PHOTOS... Top: The only known copy of Stubb's handbook, stained with coffee. Bottom: The only known picture of Stubb, September, 1969. We're not sure, but we think he's repairing a cab.



SWALLOWED BY JERSEY

What a fucking day. I was sitting alone, writing graffiti on my bedroom wall about my father. I had that vacant, ashamed feeling of Sundays years ago when my parents left me for church, back when I was too young to receive Holy Communion.

I had dirty fingernails. I'd been digging in our backyard, a pitiful square of mud blackened by soot from nearby factories. I scraped deeper as the sun threw shadows. Not a clue, no treasure chest, nothing set apart for me. Rocks and worms.

The dirt which yielded me is Avenel, New Jersey, a small, forgotten cancer between New York and Philly. Tiny steel shavings swirl through my drinking water. Our house is a typical North Jersey screen-door cottage. It has a front patio so you can watch the neighbors watching you.

I stay inside. I've lived in the basement since my early teens, when my parents remodeled my bedroom as an "entertainment room," fitting it with a stereo, bar, and ping-pong table. They covered the dusty basement floor with linoleum and left me to myself. It's OK, I guess, but damp like a wine cellar. The basement's bigger than my old bedroom, at night limitless. I'll lie on the bed in total darkness, running my fingers across the cold stucco walls two feet away. My parents could rent out the basement for five hundred dollars a month, or so they tell me.

I'm the face that disappears in your high-school yearbook. Actually, I graduated from Avenel High two years ago. I needed some spending money, so I got a job as the french-fry chef at the local Wendy's. The chain of command begins at corporate headquarters and ends at my fry station. All day long, I take white, frozen fries and drown them in vats of boiling grease. Real self-esteem builder, you know what I'm saying? Business is slow and they've been making me clock out early. Today I got laid off.

My boss has a small, round mouth and thin, pink lips. I call him Anus Face. He winks at me and crinkles his lips into a smile. "It's nothing against *you*. It's just that our supply exceeds our demand. You're a fine french-fry chef, but you can't eat them all yourself, heh, heh."

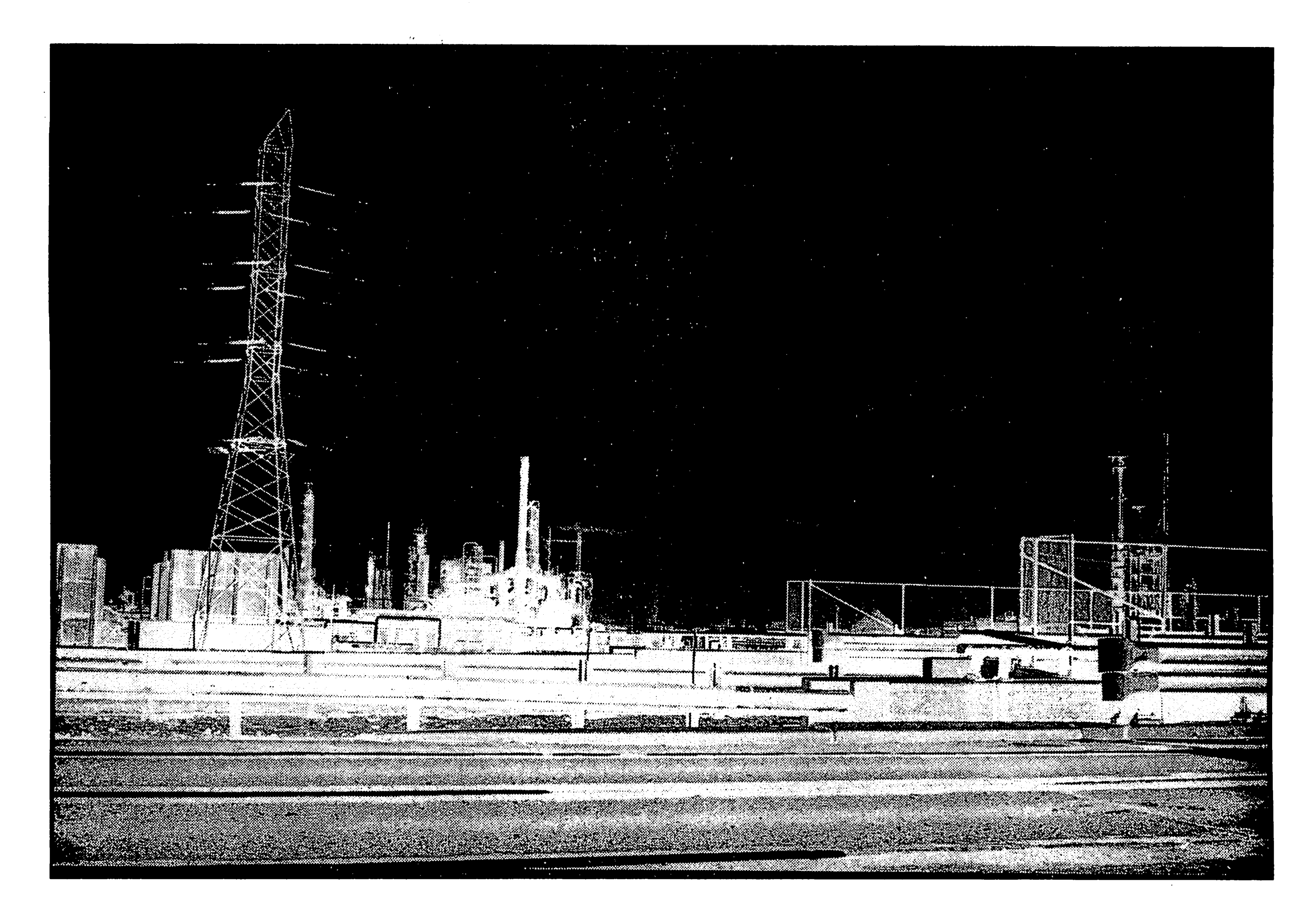
I had just finished draining and washing the fry tubs. Used grease mottles my suede loafers. "What do you mean?"

"I'll give you a fine recommendation, uh..."

I bite my lip and walk away.

So it's Friday night, and my basement's lit for a change. I hate going out, but I've got a Friday night-sized load in my balls. I've got ENERGY. I could go on combing my hair for hours. I pump some iron, but not to snag girls. Muscle keeps a little distance between me and the next guy. A little padding, you might say. If someone bumps into me, I'm protected deep inside my skin. But I feel stranded, standing in jackboots, shoulders spread back, buffing my leather jacket. I feel like everything squeaks when I move, like I give off sweat apostrophes from some anxious cartoon character. I'm so tense, my bones crack like bowling pins clonking together.

Everybody drinks in Jersey, even the nuns. I smoke dope instead. So after preening for awhile, I sit down to a fat bong and torch it. Ahh—instant warmth. Licorice for the brain. The TV lights my jelly eyes. Hefty Bags of foul air float out of the tube and clog the room. I think it's some kind of foreign-language wildlife special, but I can't tell. I sense I do things for someone else, someone I never met. Weed usually calms me down, but not when I'm this pissed. I stare down the shaft of my water pipe into the damp, sludgy resin.



I stare out at damp, sludgy stockyards from inside a steamy phone booth. My toes are frozen in my boots, curling like knuckles. She *has* to be in the white pages. She was the only one who said "Hi" to me as we passed in the corridors. I think we had a math class together or something. Yep — Sherri Winkler. Sherri fuckin' Winkler. A girl too honest to have an unlisted number. She remembers me. I'll be over in twenty minutes.

It's forty-three degrees and raining. Spring's breaking its promise again. We usually get a long winter, then the "slow tease": nice for a couple of days, then slush. I'm convinced the Fates have siphoned away the marrow from my bones and filled them with ice. I pick up a popsicle stick from the curb and shave the mud from around my boots. Have to look clean.

Oil drips slowly, faithfully from under my car, a rotting sixties muscle job. Creeping fog smothers my windshield. My upholstery smells like an elephant's asshole. I pop a cassette in the tape player. Music slips through the vents and glove compartment, filling my car like tear gas. Lots of kids split Avenel when they left high school, to college or jobs. I stayed. Lucky, lucky me. I'm a twenty-year-old retired french-fry cook. I don't have a lawyer, a bank, a shrink, an accountant, a mechanic, or *any*thing. Zzzeeeooozh! A passing car wrecks my reverie.

I drive up a crumbling ramp onto the Pulaski Skyway, a giant black bridge which straddles the yards like burnt dinosaur ribs. Up on the bridge you see steel monsters and dark silhouettes of dead factories. Corroded oil tanks line black waterways. A metallic-green sunset shrinks in the west. Rusted bedsprings and old washing machines clutter a landfill. People throw a lot of their shit away around here.

The Skyway turns into Route 9, a dilapidated strip pummeled by tonight's rain. I wind down into Elizabeth, the city with the highest infant-mortality rate in the United States. Elizabeth is home to several refineries. The smell whacks you in the face like sour brussels sprouts. Strip joints and biker bars are on every block. So are mustard-colored row homes and retired factory workers. A fat nurse glowers at me from a bus stop. I press on the gas. It's a polluted world.

Sherri and I don't really like each other, but I can tell she's lonely. Her mom nods like she knew I was coming and lets me into their house, which smells like cocker spaniels. Sherri appears in a fuzzy sky-blue sweater, the same wholesome, unremarkable Sherri I remember from high school. She's about as next-door as a girl gets. She smiles, revealing a wrinkled gob of Wrigley's spearmint gum.

"Hi."

"Hi, Sherri."

"God, I haven't seen you since graduation. I thought you moved or something. Do you want some milk or something?"

"Nah. Want to go to the mall?"

"Uh... *sure.* Mom, we're going to the mall. We'll be back about ten."

My car's rear window is broken on the passenger's side, and the heat doesn't work. Cars pass us with blasts of freezing spray. A vicious wind blows over an exposed nerve in my tooth.

Sherri trembles. "Why don't you fix the window?"

"Old car. Nobody's got the part. You my mother?"

We pass my favorite Jersey landmark, the neon Anheuser-Busch eagle in Newark. Ten stories up, amid a constant

veil of steam, the red-and-white electric bird flaps its wings, trying to get the fuck out of Jersey.

"I've been working at my cousin's insurance place," Sherri says, snapping her gum. "It's got good benefits, and I know all the people. Whatchou been up to?"

"Travel. I go down the coast—Keansburg, Asbury Park, Wildwood. It's all the same. Nothing."

"Somebody told me you were gonna be a priest. I can see that. You're very intense."

I keep quiet. The rain on my window sounds like buckshot.

"Patti and Lisa got an apartment in the city," she says. "There are parts of the city I think you'd like. You could go to college, maybe night school."

I snarl at her suggestion. "I don't *like* school, OK? I'm not looking for a job, either. Everyone around here sees progress. I see skeletons."

"I don't know. I guess I don't look at things that way. I don't try to change the world, only my life." *She's just aching to fall into a rut,* I think to myself.

Our mall is a social slaughterhouse. Everyone runs around like bad actors. Chubby husbands trail behind their screaming families, nibbling on hickory-flavored meat samples. Sexless housewives with lacquered hair peek into wig shops. Baby carriages slowly creak, mothers' mouths hanging open, eyes sunken, feet brushing the floor, fanning out all around me. Grandmothers plod by with tiny balls of pancake makeup snuggled in their wrinkles. Fathers demonstrate guns to eager sons. Expressionless people ride escalators, oblivious to the forces which drive them. Many of them know me, and they won't even look in my eyes. Oh, God, if they knew how they *really* looked. No style or poise, just goofy, half-contented smiles. People never graduate from the mall.

There's a shop where all they sell is floral herb sachets and carved soaps, where septuagenarian widows come to gussy-up their measly lives. The shop's wallpaper features a pastel theme, softened colors not occurring in nature. A bakery sits next to the soap shop. They sell flaky, pseudo-French pastries. I doubt that anyone who works there has ever been to France. The mall is the place where everything goes after it's been dissected, whitewashed, digested, homogenized, and puréed. It's less a melting pot than a cheap blender.

I'm afraid I stand out. I'm more afraid I don't. The surveillance cameras censor me as I enter their sights, my face airbrushed from every frame. I'm like a vampire in a mirror — nobody sees me. I don't register on their scale.

"You alright?"

"Yeah."

"You want to get something to eat?"

I wasn't hungry. "Sure."

Of all places in the mall, she had to pick McDonald's, with their fucking gummy little burgers. I get a Diet Coke and a bag of stale fries.

She chews loudly. "I read once that it's impossible for McDonald's to have sold all those billions of hamburgers, that every man, woman, and child in the world would have had to have eaten like a million burgers each or something."

"Don't believe what you read. I remember once—yo!" Someone nails me in the back of the head with a balled-up cheeseburger wrapper. I turn around, and a table of pep-rally types are giggling. I can tell who threw it. I knew him. He was a star basketball player from my graduating class, lanky, with insanely curly hair. Arkansas. This guy definitely looks like an Arkan*sonian*: red skin, square jaw, terrier haircut. Hyperpubescent, with zits like smashed cherries. A walking instinct blob, someone who laughs at the same joke over and over again. Girls really liked him, though you knew he'd go to seed in ten years. I forget his name. A "Joe," a real Joe, or maybe a "Pete."

His friends all look alike: boating clothes and shiny adolescent faces fresh from OXY-10 scrubs. Freckles. Miles of freckles. They're smiling nervously and eyeing each other for cues. I know them all too well—phony as wax testicles, yet my mom would like them. They curse their parents around their friends but suck up to Mums and Daddy when they need money. I hate, fear, and envy them. Against Sherri's desperate pleadings, I walk over to their table.

"Joe" looks up glaringly from his Big Mac. "You're a faggot."

"You're a fuckin' robot, a stupid goldfish. You believe everything your parents told you." The kids at the table laugh loudly, as if I'd said something preposterous. Time for the big ammo. "What's the matter? Ain't you supposed to be in the NBA by now? Those black dudes too much for ya? Too big? Too fast?" I knew this would piss him off. He was an outmoded commodity—the white athlete. He did only one thing well, but others did it better. He knew it.

"I'll kick your ass from here to Perth Amboy."

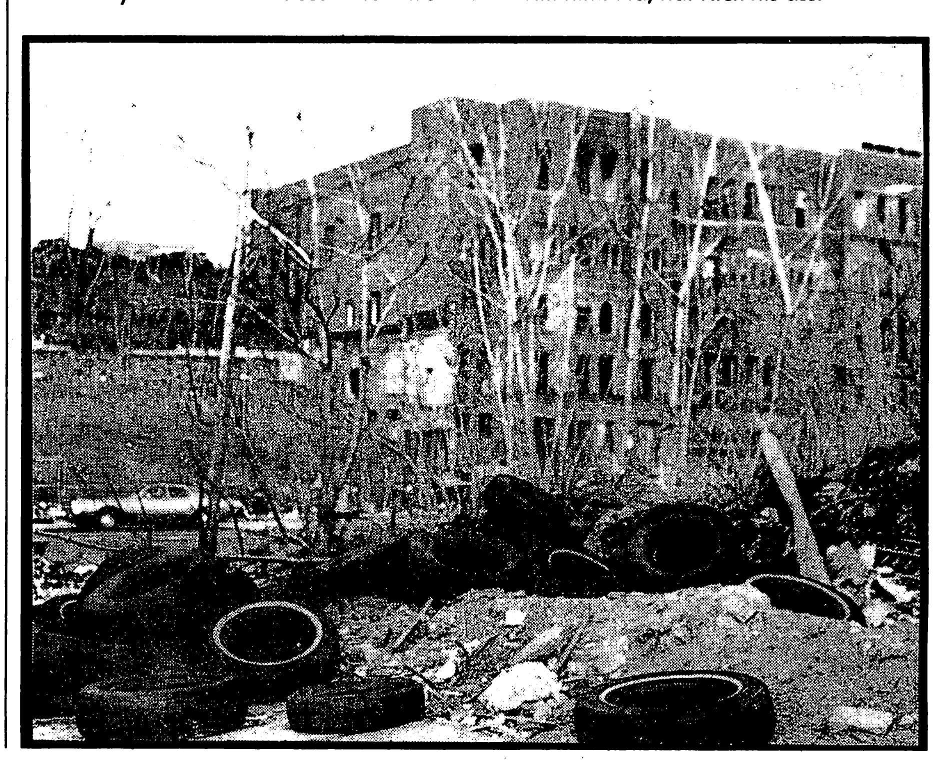
What could I say? "Ain't it hard to beat somebody up while you're blowin' 'em?"

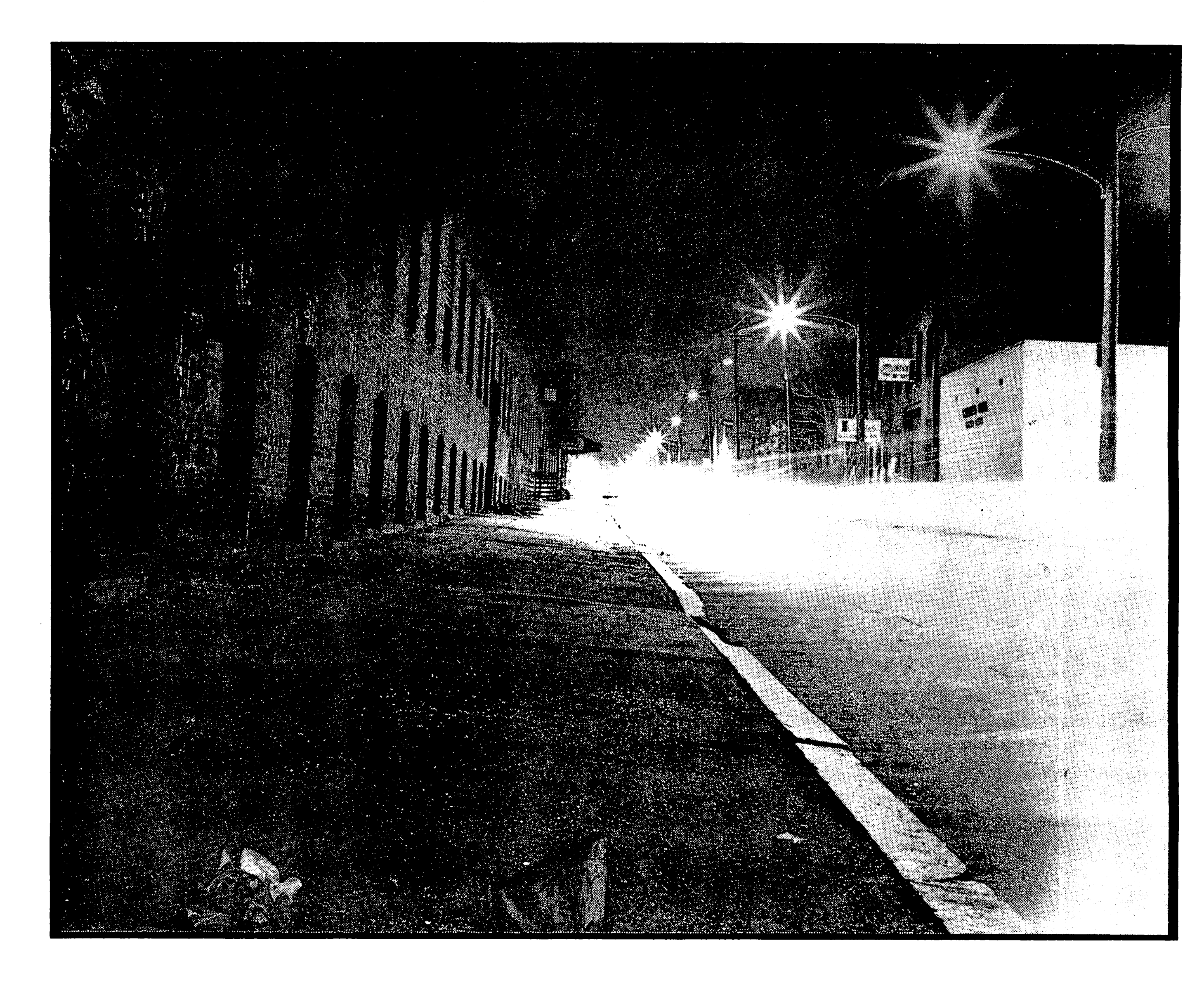
The manager behind the counter looks frightened. My buddy "Joe" is purple, quivering, ready to erupt.

"Let's take it outside, fag. Right NOW! GRRRR!" His table clears instantly. Most of McDonald's follows out in joyous bloodlust. Caught in the motion, I strain to hear what his friends are saying.

"Who cares? He's a weird-ass anyway. *Every*body thinks he's weird."

"Kill him. Ha, ha! Kick his ass."





"Troublemaker."

"Pussy."

Nothing gets me higher than pure, uncut rage. I slam through the exit into misty breath clouds and the stink of burger grease on the crowd's faces. My brain pushes like putty through my ears. I flash him my eyes' whites, a hardball look like a shark only inches from the kill. I'm ready to pop him, clock him, rip his lips open, scramble his brains, gouge his eyes out, stomp on his nuts, wipe my boots on his face, gladly share my pain with him.

I step up. The world slides off the side of my face. I feel the familiar asphalt crunch and skull lightning. It's over quick, and he tears me apart, the first person I touched in a year-and-a-half or so.

Everything suddenly has a glazed cuteness. I catch my eye in mirrors, swaying in and away from the locals. Words come from their mouths in slow, loopy streams. Feet flat on cement, I weave toward them. Even the ones who don't know me hate me. I always play the Antichrist.

Sherri grabs my arm and pulls me past the circle. "Ohmigod, ohmigod, ohmigod, are you OK?"

"I'm OK." I'm lying. "You don't think I'm an asshole, do you?"

"No, of course not." She's lying.

"Let's get the hell out of here before the pigs come," I say. "Let's go up to the cliffs in North Bergen. You can see where we live from there. Nobody'll find us up there, either."

Woozy, I zip up pockmarked roads past frozen faces of black and Hispanic kids. We pull behind a heavily fenced water-processing plant and park at the cliffs. I leave the engine on and hop out.

My headlights flare out over the immense valley below. Brown and orange embers streak the void. No moon. It almost looks nice. It stopped raining, and you can see the refineries blazing away down in Elizabeth. The highways go everywhere from here. I could take Route 9 into I-95 straight down to Florida or up into Canada. I-80 and a couple of switches would lead all the way out west. I let go with a loud, deep howl, maybe thirty seconds long. No echo. You could scream your guts out up here and nobody'd hear you.

She shifts her feet, ignoring my baying. "It's beautiful. So many lights. I couldn't begin to count them all."

"You've counted them by seeing them." My voice fades. "Those people in that mall never come up here. They're afraid they'll get lost or some Puerto Rican kid'll jump 'em."

"I've never been up here, either," she says, teeth clacking.

I bite my toothpick. "Look—you want to go to a hotel? Nice and warm? Maybe have a soda and watch some cable? I know a good place in Union City."

"Union City? Isn't that a bad neighborhood?"

I cock my eyes to burn right through her. "No, it's a bad *city.* Ever been there?"

"No. I just heard it was bad."

"Let's go. At least it's warm there." Maybe one kiss could keep me alive.

I remembered the ad from the yellow pages:



1112 E. 31st St.
Union City, N.J. 07087
"Comfort at Affordable Prices"
Waterbeds • Cable

An olive-colored woman gives us the key at the front desk. She's from somewhere I can't pronounce, but now she's more American than me.

We walk down an eighty-foot concrete path to our room, a battered shack of maroon-painted aluminum. The outside is lit with a long, fluorescent yellow bulb. Brittle spider bodies and shells of moths are lined within the bulb's casing. I fumble with the key.

It's a suffocating sauna of a room charged with dry, static air. A heater, turned up to "10" apparently to kill germs, whirs loudly in a corner. Everything smells like curry and armpits. Fermented sperm wads are spun across the lima-bean-colored carpet. People had scratched their names all over the plywood walls and styrofoam ceiling. I put my plastic ice bucket and sodas near the night table.

She turns on the TV. As the static clears, I recognize the corny sound of porn-movie jazz. Saxophones blare like anal canals being forced open. The actors' red bodies connect and wriggle like fish hooked together. Sherri stares at the screen, concerned but intrigued. I fill the sanitized cups with soda, the bubbles stinging my nose.

I was always fascinated by movies of naked people touching each other. They acted differently during sex—more honest, more likeable. Nothing deliberate. Like lizards, no thoughts. Pretty.

Fully clothed on the bed's edge, I hand her a soda and put my arm lightly around her waist. Her synthetic sweater itches my inner forearm. I lift her hair and lick the back of her neck. She breaks the embrace and leans forward.

"Ooh, what a sore! Poor baby." She touches my eyebrow, still a little mushy with blood. Nothing like ruining the mood. "You should really go into the bathroom and take a look at it."

I go into the bathroom, but I don't look in the mirror. I whip out my prick, already half-swollen, and start pissing. I imagine her body, pale like mine: floppy tits, fat ass, but clear, open eyes. Her cunt smells like a heap of dead bodies, a sewage dump, a thousand dead mackerel. Shallow breathing. A rubber between us. *Don't kiss me. OK, if you want me to bleed, kiss me.* My piss slows to a dribble. I walk out, avoiding the mirror again, and she's sitting near the door, clutching her purse.

BLUM-BLUM-BLUM—my heart's punching its way out of my chest. "What the fuck is this?"

"I'm sorry. I can't go this far with you. I don't want to lead you on. I called a cab." She had switched the TV from porn to CNN. "You embarrassed me tonight. You're too angry." The corner heater goes VEEM! "People are basically *good.*"

"So that's why you're splitting? 'Cause you're basically a good person and you basically want me to be miserable? People aren't good, they're savage little shits. They don't think, they imitate. I can tell what's coming out of their mouths before they spit it out. They're born. They grow up. They turn into their parents. Wow! I'm too *much* for around here."

"I know. They said you used to be really funny, but you lost it, you got serious."

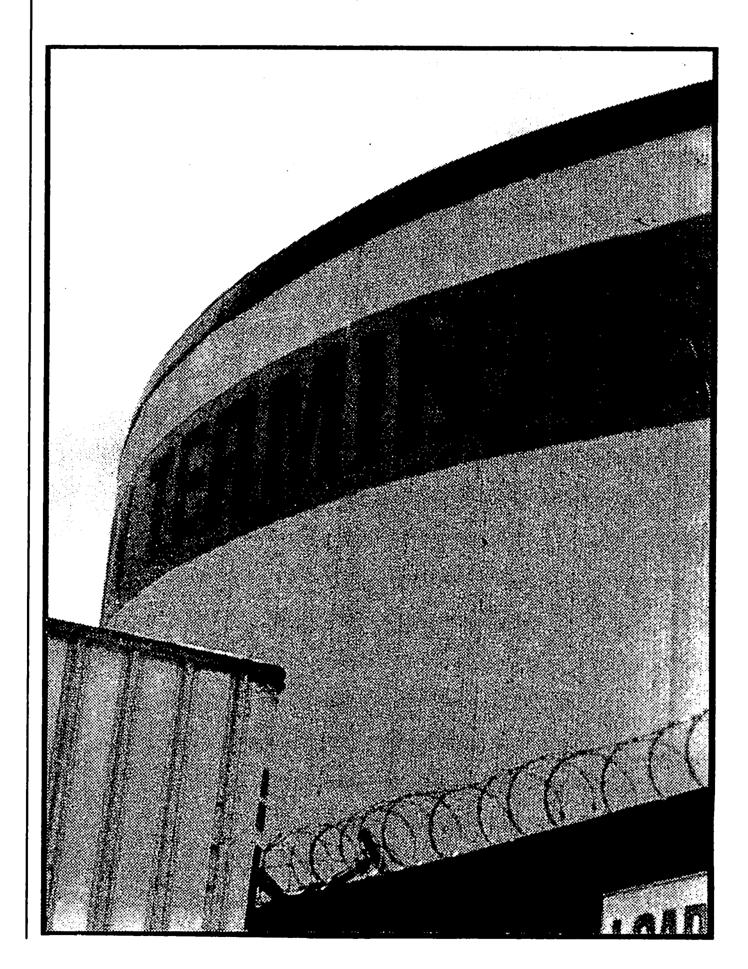
"Everything got serious *around* me." The more I say, the more she looks away.

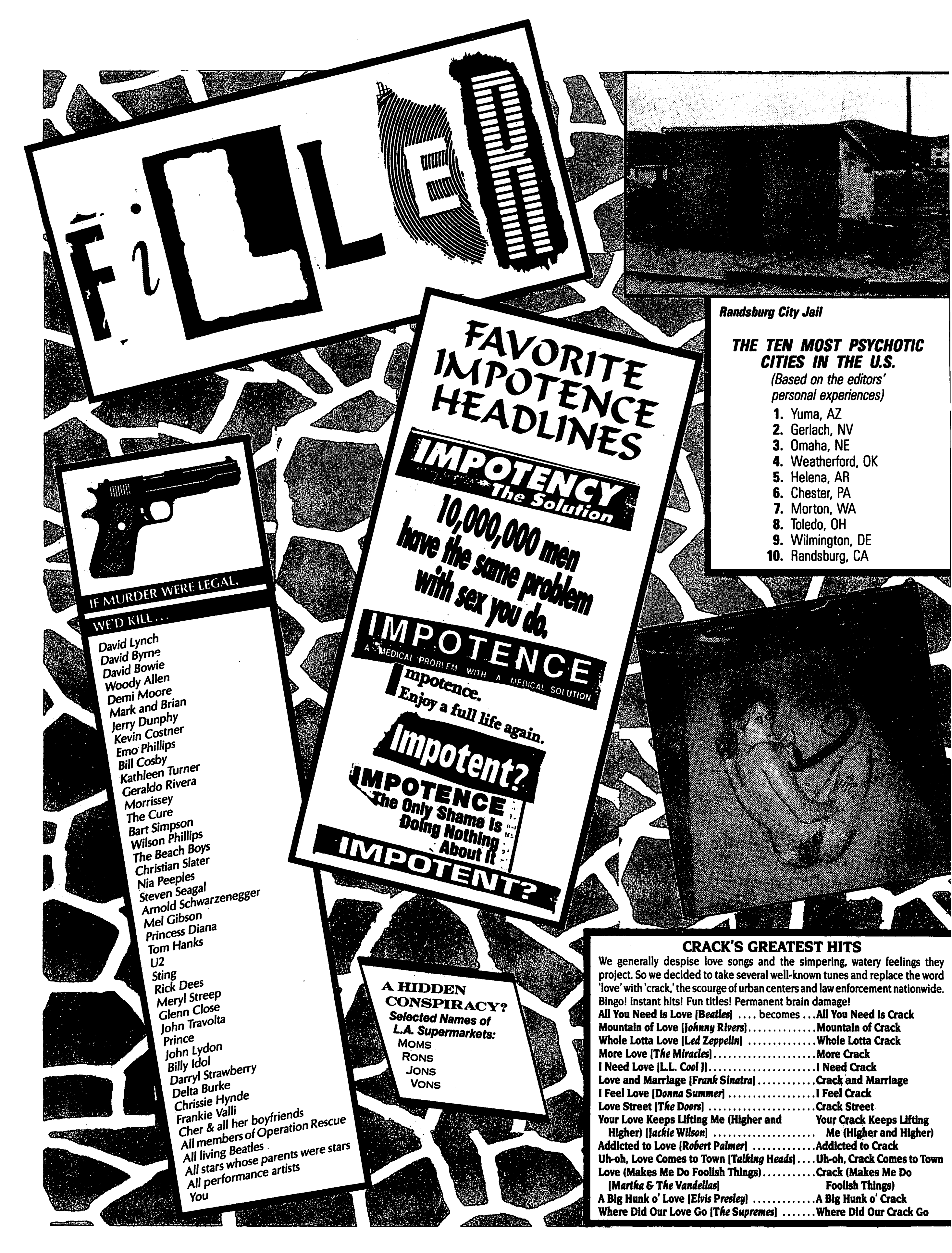
She took a cab home, didn't say goodbye. The bed's still made. What, I'm at my funeral and nobody knows I'm alive? I always got stuck in people's throats.

It's dawn. They're turning off the artificial lights outside. Pretty soon, the maid'll be knocking on the door. Believe me, if I could've planned it, I wouldn't have ended up here, just me and some hotel stationery.

I was always about three seconds off everyone else. Nobody *knows* me. They can slap, pinch, squeeze, and kick me, but not an ounce of me seeps out. I'm airtight, sealed with the drunken kiss that kicked off my conception. Squirt! There I was. I learned to walk, poke at things, bite them, but they were always far away. At two years old, I could close my eyes and the world disappeared. Too bad I lost that gift.

So what? At least I've stained their canvas. No matter how they run their lives, I'm the exception that proves them wrong. If they want to fuck around with me, fine. I'll leave them, just like they left me. I guess I came here to do what I *have* to do. ■





Randsburg City Jail

THE TEN MOST PSYCHOTIC CITIES IN THE U.S.

(Based on the editors' personal experiences)

1. Yuma, AZ
2. Gerlach, NV
3. Omaha, NE
4. Weatherford, OK
5. Helena, AR
6. Chester, PA
7. Morton, WA
8. Toledo, OH
9. Wilmington, DE
10. Randsburg, CA

IF MURDER WERE LEGAL,

WE'D KILL...

David Lynch
David Byrne
David Bowie
Woody Allen
Demi Moore
Mark and Brian
Jerry Dunphy
Kevin Costner
Emo Phillips
Bill Cosby
Kathleen Turner
Geraldo Rivera
Morrissey
The Cure
Bart Simpson
Wilson Phillips
The Beach Boys
Christian Slater
Nia Peeples
Steven Seagal
Arnold Schwarzenegger
Mel Gibson
Princess Diana
Tom Hanks
U2
Sting
Rick Dees
Meryl Streep
Glenn Close
John Travolta
Prince
John Lydon
Billy Idol
Darryl Strawberry
Delta Burke
Chrissie Hynde
Frankie Valli
Cher & all her boyfriends
All members of Operation Rescue
All living Beatles
All stars whose parents were stars
All performance artists
You

A HIDDEN CONSPIRACY?

Selected Names of L.A. Supermarkets:

MOMS
RONS
JONS
VONS

CRACK'S GREATEST HITS

We generally despise love songs and the simpering, watery feelings they project. So we decided to take several well-known tunes and replace the word 'love' with 'crack,' the scourge of urban centers and law enforcement nationwide. Bingo! Instant hits! Fun titles! Permanent brain damage!

All You Need Is Love [*Beatles*] .... becomes	All You Need Is Crack
Mountain of Love [*Johnny Rivers*]	Mountain of Crack
Whole Lotta Love [*Led Zeppelin*]	Whole Lotta Crack
More Love [*The Miracles*]	More Crack
I Need Love [*L.L. Cool J*]	I Need Crack
Love and Marriage [*Frank Sinatra*]	Crack and Marriage
I Feel Love [*Donna Summer*]	I Feel Crack
Love Street [*The Doors*]	Crack Street
Your Love Keeps Lifting Me (Higher and Higher) [*Jackie Wilson*]	Your Crack Keeps Lifting Me (Higher and Higher)
Addicted to Love [*Robert Palmer*]	Addicted to Crack
Uh-oh, Love Comes to Town [*Talking Heads*]	Uh-oh, Crack Comes to Town
Love (Makes Me Do Foolish Things) [*Martha & The Vandellas*]	Crack (Makes Me Do Foolish Things)
A Big Hunk o' Love [*Elvis Presley*]	A Big Hunk o' Crack
Where Did Our Love Go [*The Supremes*]	Where Did Our Crack Go



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

You've probably seen this phrase, accompanied by a toll-free number, written on the packages of several supermarket items. Come to think of it, we *do* have a comment, even though it's a lie:

"I was overwhelmed with suicidal depression as a result of using your product."

After initial befuddlement, most telephone representatives offered advice or stammered through well-intentioned explanations. Here are some highlights of their responses:

HERSHEY'S CHOCOLATE: *"Oh, well.* [Laughs] *Then I would suggest not eating it."*

KRAFT GRATED ROMANO CHEESE: *"I could not venture a guess as to why this is happening. I would strongly suggest that you go to your doctor, if in fact you feel like it's the Romano cheese. Take a can of cheese with you, because he would know better than I could tell you what the problem might be."*

TIDE DETERGENT: *"I have never heard of a laundry detergent causing depression.... Are there problems at home that you're having problems with? I would think you'd want to speak to a professional doctor with a problem like that."*

TAMPAX TAMPONS: *"I don't really know what to tell you. The tampons don't have anything in them that would affect your hormonal balance or your emotional state, OK?"*

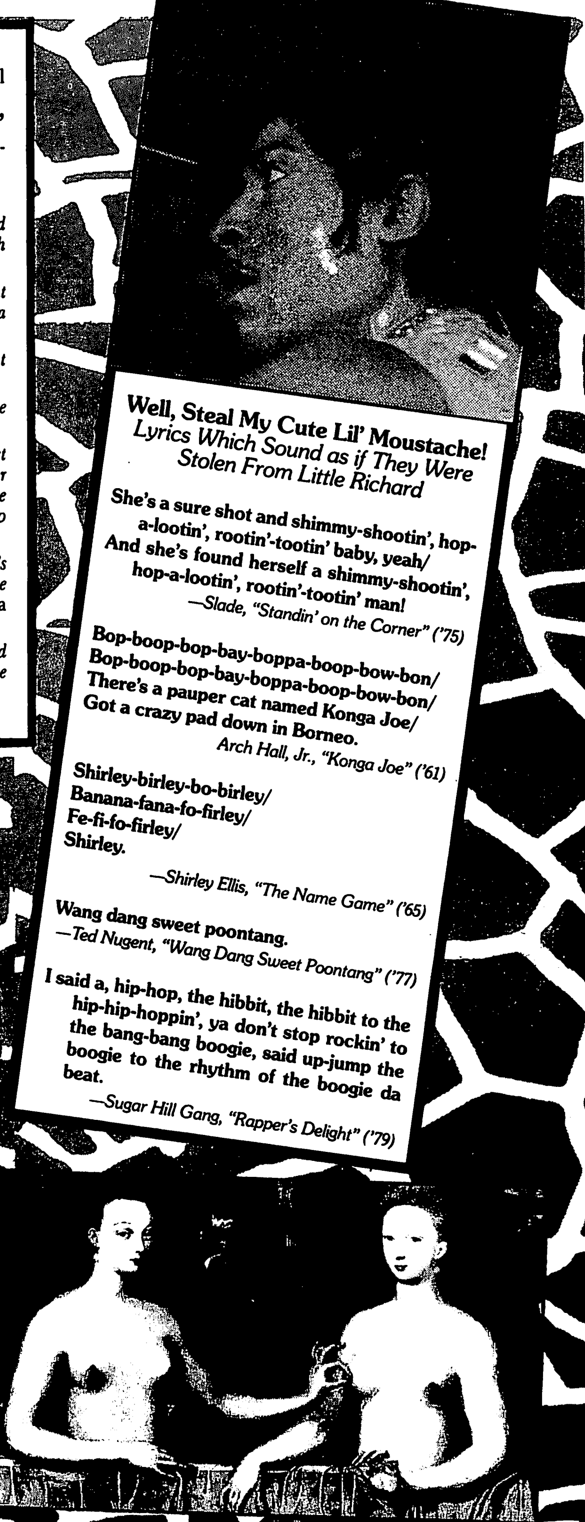
OSCAR MAYER LUNCHABLES: *"There's just meat and cheese and crackers.... I would think there must be some sort of a helpline."*

TODAY'S CHOICE TISSUES: *"Hmm. OK. Well, actually, we just make it from 100% recycled fibers, OK, just from other paper products, so I can't imagine how that would cause you to get upset.... We actually buy our scraps, so it's made from, like, envelope scraps and other materials that wouldn't have any drugs or anything like that in it that would cause any type of disorder, so I can't imagine how that would occur. But we would be happy to test them and look at them for you."*

GENERAL FOODS INTERNATIONAL COFFEES: *"You feel the coffee has made you suicidal?... That's awful. I'm sorry to hear that.... Let me pull up our 'Illness Questions' and see if we can get some more information. I've never heard of that before, and I'm very sorry that you feel that way."* (She proceeds to read from a long list of illness questions.)

JIF PEANUT BUTTER: *"Have you had problems with suicide in the past?... Are you susceptible to mood swings when you have sugar?... Jif or any type of food will not cause a person to have a feeling that they would like to commit suicide. What I would suggest you do is call your suicide-prevention agency in your area."*

FOLGERS COFFEE: *"I'd be more than happy to replace the coffee for you."*



Well, Steal My Cute Lil' Moustache!
Lyrics Which Sound as if They Were Stolen From Little Richard

She's a sure shot and shimmy-shootin', hop-a-lootin', rootin'-tootin' baby, yeah/ And she's found herself a shimmy-shootin', hop-a-lootin', rootin'-tootin' man!
—*Slade, "Standin' on the Corner" ('75)*

Bop-boop-bop-bay-boppa-boop-bow-bon/ Bop-boop-bop-bay-boppa-boop-bow-bon/ There's a pauper cat named Konga Joe/ Got a crazy pad down in Borneo.
Arch Hall, Jr., "Konga Joe" ('61)

Shirley-birley-bo-birley/ Banana-fana-fo-firley/ Fe-fi-fo-firley/ Shirley.
—*Shirley Ellis, "The Name Game" ('65)*

Wang dang sweet poontang.
—*Ted Nugent, "Wang Dang Sweet Poontang" ('77)*

I said a, hip-hop, the hibbit, the hibbit to the hip-hip-hoppin', ya don't stop rockin' to the bang-bang boogie, said up-jump the boogie to the rhythm of the boogie da beat.
—*Sugar Hill Gang, "Rapper's Delight" ('79)*

ANSWER Me!'s Forbidden Words and Phrases

Sick puppy
Happy camper
Bogus
Making love
Maxed out
Life's a beach
Bitchin'
Anything "______ski"
Anything "______meister"
Don't have a cow
Codependency
Dysfunctional
Male bonding
Nurturing
Quality time
Doing lunch
Prioritizing
Parenting
Pampering oneself
Politically correct
Moi
Kick butt (or ass)
Let's rock 'n' roll
That's the ticket
This is true
You bet
A big "if"
Buddy film
Classic rock
Alternative music

Los Angeles Police Department
Police Line—Do Not Cross



Departamento De Policia De Los Angeles
Linea De Policia—Por Favor No Cruzar

***ANSWER Me!'s* Best of L.A.:** 1. Alienation 2. Gangs 3. Smog 4. Traffic 5. Prostitutes 6. PCP 7. Conspiracy Theorists 8. Skin Cancer

ANSWER Me!

★ NO ADS ★ NO ADS ★ NO ADS ★ NO ADS ★ NO ADS


ISSUE 2
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ANTON LaVEY
RAISES HELL
MURDER!
★ GIANT A-Z GUIDE TO KILLERS
★ VIETNAMESE GANGS WITH UZIS
★ MEXICAN DEATH RAGS
AVID DUKE on Whether
Blonds Have More Fun
ETO BOYS Threaten
White America
RACISM!
PORNOGRAPHY!
AL GOLDSTEIN
Screws You
EL DUCE Spews
Musical Filth
THE FAMILY MUST BE ELIMINATED ★ I HATE WOMEN ★ I HATE MEN ★ THE UNDERGROUND IS A LIE



ISSUE 2

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ASSISTANT EDITOR

MY WIFE!

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Front and back cover drawings by the multitalented Nick Bougas

SPECIAL THANKS TO

HUH?

TABLE OF SHIT

GABFESTS

DIATRIBES

VÉRITÉ

FILLER

*Articles with an asterisk were written by Debbie Goad/ all others were written by her owner.

THE WRATH OF GOAD



Here's what happened to the last person who fucked with us.

"ANSWER Me!"

is the last thing I say before I hit someone: "Why'd you do it, huh? Why'd you have to push me? ***ANSWER Me!***" Their teeth shatter, the blood streams from their nose, and they collapse into a piteous heap. I become their master and force them to suck the horrid crust suspended in my anal hairs. I make them **LICK MY ASS!**

I have assault records in three states. My hatred is diamond-hard. It can stop bullets and cause earthquakes. Hatred is the air I breathe. It permeates every cell in my body. You can't wear it out. It'll never die. It watches you while you sleep. It confronts you around every corner. It chases you down like a running dog. My hatred is a thousand times more powerful than all your good intentions.

My life? My old man's a dead alcoholic, and my mother wants to marry my uncle, but she's hesitating because she'll lose her government checks. I was booted out of the house at nineteen and haven't received a penny of support from **ANYONE** since then, although mom gives ten percent of her money to the church. I live in a piece-of-shit building where there's running water about half the time. I drive a twenty-four-year-old car and can't even get a credit card. I work a full-time job starting at 9 in the morning. Without taking a lunch break, I get home at 5:15 p.m., eat dinner, and work on ***ANSWER Me!*** until 1 or 2 a.m. **EVERY FUCKING NIGHT**. I work twelve hours a day on weekends, **EVERY WEEKEND**.

Yet, in their endless gall, some smelly leftist types have grumbled about our relatively high production values, hinting that we must be rich kids or have some shadowy financing. They don't think a magazine's legitimate unless it looks like someone wiped themselves with it. They don't realize that shittiness is only a virtue if it's unintentional. They talk shit, create shit, and eat shit, so it's only natural that they should **LICK MY ASS!**

It's like this: At our menial jobs, Debbie and I make about twenty grand a year each. That's it. **NO** inheritance, **NO** subsidizing, **NO** strings attached. The whole bleeding mag comes out of our pockets. I couldn't care less about your sympathy. It's just that the only ones who've ever criticized us are upper-middle-class poseurs who have the raw-bone nerve to call *us* upscale. Go hit on your parents for your allowance and leave me alone. You've never seen anger like mine. **LICK IT**, baby!

Dumb, useless, dime-a-million sheep. Bullshit political fantasies, crude philosophical kinescopes. Too frightened to see the planet as it is. Yeah—recycling tin cans will save the world. Music will save the world. Breast-feeding will save the world. The ideas which you've stolen from others will save the world.

Since the last issue, I've resolved my "authority problem." I'm not anti-authority; I'm anti-**YOU**. I'm not trying to overthrow the government; I want the government to smash **YOU**. Face it—anti-authoritarianism is just sour grapes. Anti-authoritarians are the ones who were too stupid to grab a little power themselves, so they toss pebbles and call it "revolution."

I'm not puking out hate because I want to change things. I'm not trying to get you to think like me. I don't want to galvanize you and your friends into some collective blob. Get the point? I **HATE** you! You're unworthy of redemption. I'm light-years ahead of you, and by the time you realize it, I'll be further on. I'm a snob, but I don't base it on what you're wearing, where you come from, or what kind of car you drive—I flare my nostrils with imperious disdain at the vast darkness between your ears. On your knees, slave, and **LICK MY ASS!**

You fuck with us, you don't get fucked back, you get **KILLED**. You don't know who we know. If you're smart, you'll stay away, but you're not smart. A few people tried to fuck with us, and boy, are they sorry! We hear through certain channels that they're scared shitless. They should be. But it won't stop there. Believe this—we make good on our threats, no matter how long it takes.

And so I walk away. My victims lie groping on the concrete, screaming for someone to call the police. Their skulls are crushed, along with their dreams. And they still don't have an answer.



Jim Goad
Editor/Publisher/Terminator

ANSWER This!

THE READERS BITE BACK

Chris West
[redacted]
Melbourne
Australia
13th April 1992

Dear Answer Me
I had the pleasure of buying the first editon of Answer Me when I was in L.A. over Christmas. It is one of the greatest magazines I have ever read!! The article, " 24 hours on Sunset", summed up life in L.A. more succinctly that the tonnes of books , articles and general bullshit that has been written or spoken about L.A. While "Babies are Dirty" has at least stopped my wife speaking incessantly about having a bloody kid and made her think about the ramifications of having another mouth to feed.She thought the idea of used tampons as decorations was rather sweet.
When is No.2 coming out , or has it? I have enclosed an International Reply Coupon , could you please let me know by return airmail how I can purchase forther copies of Answer Me.

Keep up the Great Work
Chr West

HEY!
YOUR MAG IS
BITCHEN-ASS,
MAN! I DIG IT.
FUNNIER THAN
FUCKEN SHIT.
ITS SWELL.
THANKS -
BUTLER

I don't speak Californian can anyone translate?

FUCK ALTERNATIVE "MUSIC!

SPEC'S UNADVERTISED SPECIAL
xxxx

January 5, 1992.
ANDREW BROWN,
[redacted]
HOUSTON, TX.

JIMMY GOAD —
HEY ASSHOLE! ANSWER Me IS A REAL SWIFT KICK and LO, COPASETIC 'TWAS SWELL GABBING with YOU ON THE PHONE AS WELL. TO PROVE WHAT a SISSY-BOY you are, however, I'M HIPPING you TO THE tremendously "UNGAWA" ST. LOUIS WHIRL-EXAMINER TO SHOW WHAT REAL Journalism IS ALL ABOUT. I WOULD'VE SENT YOU A FEW COPIES if I THOUGHT you would be so CONSIDERATE to Return them. But THAT'S PROBABLY ASKING TOO MUCH. so XEROXES'll have to SUFFICE. Keep up the great work and hey, WHY ARE YOU SO FUCKING STUPID, anyway?
BEAST, Andrew Brown

DON'T COME TO HOUSTON OR I WILL KILL YOU!
ARE YOU A DOPE EATER?
P.S. DON'T LET THIS GO TO YER HEAD - but YOU SUCK!

JIM, BABY, YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A HERO!

If I ever did come to Houston, you'd be doing me a favor by killing me.

Jim & Debbie,
Good Work! Damn good magazine. I found Answer Me! at Powell's Books here in Portland. You two have the right attitude. The magazine really saved an otherwise fucked up, useless pathetic Sunday for me. & Are subscriptions available? If so let me know and I'll sign up. Thanks Again!
ERIC LARSEN
[redacted]
PORTLAND, OR
[redacted]

We publish too erratically to offer subscriptions, but send your money anyway.

FROM: LUKE MC GUFF
[redacted]
Seattle, WA [redacted]

TO: Answer Me|Jim Goad
6820 Selma Ave. Suite 1171
Hollywood, CA 90028

12/30/91

Dear Jim,

Hey, how's it going? Picked up ANSWER Me! at Bulldog News in Seattle many they had ordered, I bought one of the last two.

I think the reason I bought it (after joshing myself about "could be gettin ground floor, hrmm") was because you had an anti-AA article in it. I also got th same night, which also had an anti-AA article in it. In fact, the guy who wrote article could well have attended the same Hollywood AA meeting you did. Or n found out your pseudonym or something.

In short, anyway, I was real glad to read your experiences in seeking out meetings, why you rejected them, your own steps (which cracked me up; the N the steps for AAA — Alcoholics Anonymous Anonymous — and for some reaso step really cracked me up in both cases), and your attitude as to why you decided using marijuana and all that.

The way I remember it, I woke up when I was 25 and realized that it was stop blaming my parents for how they handled me, and to take responsibility fo life. I could very well be imposing a number of later reworkings on rationalizat memory, and I'm also likely to be compressing a process that took few or sever

But I decided to go to school, learn a trade (typesetting), get and keep a jo other things. It wasn't until I was 28, three years later, that I officially quit smo although I had put some effort into tapering off for all that time.

But I'm really glad I didn't fall into a "support group" during any of the hooked or trying to quit. I readily admit that it was powerlessness that got me th was developing my own sense of power that got me out. Realizing I had survived shit (relatively mild, but still a certain amount of self-inflicted shit in the face) was *more* powerful than I had previously given myself credit for. And, as I said developing that sense of power (still going strong) that helped me to quit — enab empowered, take your pick.

I recently had a run-in with a couple AA kids. I had a crush on one of the we formed a study group for this class we were taking. (I'm going to a communi Anyway, we got together one day and did a bunch of studying, and it was really then the next Sunday, we got into this totally mad caffeine binge fueled by drun all of that. Whew! I actually had a great time, because it was one of the few time really gone out there (so to speak) since moving here from Minneapolis. Hah! Bu

worthless as far as studying, and kind of atomized what might have been a good group of friends.

This experience is what triggered me into thinking about why I quit smoki what is denial (I mean, when I was using alcohol a lot, it was just another item phamacopeia, but it would be denial in AA terms to say I never had a drinking p what is controlled use, I don't know.

After reading your article, and the one in the Nose, I was walking around "Fuck Powerlessness!" That's when I started thinking about what got me into it, got out.

One of the ensnaring things about support groups is that you *can't* define y using *some* of their terms and techniques, where appropriate, and rejecting the o don't fit. It has to be all or nothing at all.

I think my distrust with groups and organizations started with the Catholi Church. Yes, I was an altar boy. Catholicism has a sense of powerlessness to it, th that if not for your guardian angel you'll plunge to hell in a minute. Or that if you one little mistake it's all over with. In fact, I distinctly remember a nun saying tha so much as steal a nickle from a schoolmate's desk, you're on the road to ruin and might as well be a bank robber. So I stole that nickle. Yeah! Anyway, my distrust organizations came when I started to realize that the words of St. Paul were quite than the words of Jesus Christ, and that the church worshipped Christ, but follow doctrines and dogma of St. Paul, and others who set up the hierarchical structure church has today.

Organizations have their own agenda. If the Catholic Church was *really* in in getting people in touch with the Holy Spirit, then they would acknowledge that a multitude of paths and means to this end. Similarly, if AA was *really* interested sobriety, they would acknowledge people like us who just quit on our own, people Antabuse, and other things like that.

AA itself leads to another state of denial. I kind of dug the way you talked ab smoking dope in Bakersfield and on Sunset Boulevard. Hah! And I'm not going to something like "My worst day sober is better than my best day drunk." Frankly, tha necessarily true. My worst day sober is definitely better than my worst day stoned, that for it. I mean, at least because I wasn't using. And it was realizing that that g little extra strength to go on, and keep on not using.

But saying that my worst day sober is better than my best day stoned is flat o untrue. I mean, I had *fun* sometimes, some pretty out there experiences that I don (or miss, either for that matter). Why should I deny it? Why should I take a purita attitude that *any* amount of use is wrong? Fuck that! I like getting buzzed on caffe (although I'm about a cup over the line — well, maybe two, I don't know), and I do there's anything wrong with seeking out mood or mental-state altering substances. animals do it (believe it or else -- honeybees and poppy plants, I read about it in *Sci News*). I must admit that when I see someone with a high use plateau, even thoug they're using technically fucking up their lives, I feel like it's a serious waste of ti money. But somebody who likes a regular glass of beer a couple times a month isn' addict, and isn't on the road to ruin necessarily. Just the same applies to someone smokes a couple hits of dope a day. Sheesh. I mean, I knew I had a smoking proble soon after I got it into, it was an ounce a week right from the start almost.

Frankly, I think that addiction relates to the toxicity of the drug. Combine a t drug with someone who has little sense of self, and what do you get? Uh oh! Crack come to town.

Another thing I think that leads to addiction is the Puritan attitude we have fun and frolic. We're not taught (or even told that it's okay) to make choices about happiness, to make choices that go against the grain of society. We're only told to w a good education to get a good job (one of the things I knew was a lie the first time and which kept me from getting a good education for many years). Can't have fun, fuck around, can't make choices for yourself. Well, then, into this stew of suppress discover an angel chemical (not a *real* angel, but an angel chemical, know what I And this angel blows away all our bad feelings and unhappiness and all our quest too. Then what? Then we blow away our lives using this shit over and over, little ra pleasure-center-stimulation bar. When really, if we had it in us that it was possible *fun*, that it was okay to choose a different path, or our own path, whatever, then we' likely to take our alienation out in drug abuse.

I think society creates alienation through it's lack of choices. And as society stratifies and shrinks, more and more people will be alienated, etc.

So, there you have. While writing about addiction here I've drunk so much co well, I only drank one cup during the letter itself, but there was a certain amount c caffeination carried over from the morning — anyway, I'm all confused and atomi it's about time to go to the po anyway. Hah! So here's a bunch of stuff which you can not for your second (or whatever) issue. Yeah! Feel free in all cases to revise, manip expand, contract, whatever you want to do. Okay! See you then, Ben.

Byeee.

I'm sorry, I was distracted—can you repeat th

Dear Jim and Debbie Goad, ← UNPROFESSIONAL. Fuck PROFESSIONAL!

I usually don't write letters except in my job. A lot of hypocrit-
ical and underhanded business drek that would make you go into dry-
heaves. But your new mag ANSWER ME! GOADed me into writing a non-busi-
ness letter. But just this one time only. Your new mag is a refreshing
response to all the monumental BULLSHIT that's being shoved down our
throats by the Bush-Falwell types, the PC-Liberals and the hysterical,
howling media! I would like to take all of these left-right fascists
to the nearest city dump and shoot them! Hell, by the end of this dec-
ade, the old US of A will be a computerized Thrid Reich.What do I care
if some idiot down the block is blowing out his brains on smack or snow?
Just leagalize it, let 'em have it at cheap free-market prices. At least
they won't be mugging me or ripping off my house to pay for their joll-
ies. But Bush and the CIA/Mafia combine wouldn't be part of the cash
flow anymore. Fuck just-say-no! Just say mind-your-own-goddamn-business!

Your rag is right on target about Yuppies. I should know. I'm one
of them. Or at least I look like one of 'em. In case you haven't heard
yet out there in Munchkin Land, there's something like a political awak-
ening happening here, the midwest and northeast. The embicile yuppe are
beginning to think that they have been had by the (heh, heh!) "neo-
conservative" movement. They're burnt-out with their jobs. They really
don't want their trendy babies, they hate them. They actually think
that their economic futures and liberties are being flushed down the
john by Bush's money-men and his gestapo Surpeme Court. And they are
starting to see through all the New Right social propaganda. Yeah, and
they think that Reagan-Bush really did cut a deal with Khomeini in 1980,
in midsummer if not October of that year. The Yuppies are now mouthing
words like - omigosh - conspiracy, scam, shadow-government. A MUTATION
IS OCCURING, whether Time magazine admits it or not. The species Yuppus
Petrificus will die in the coming depression, anyway. Good-bye and good
riddance to our stupid genes.

I think that crazed TV, Holly Woodlawn, has the right idea. Let's get
the hell out of America, AMERICA IS OVER. Let's go, let's make an EXODUS
to a modern country, anyway. I just hope the American Fascists of the
Right and Left don't follow us on the way.

"Johnny B. Goode" J.B.
Lexington, KY.

P.S. THIS LETTER proves that you can write something readable without a damn computer. A first in Yuppiedumb! Now, if Kentucky could only get dictionaries.....the preachers and the censors are trying to ban them!

You can tell me to FuckOFF, but I still Love You, MAR! (sic) ANSWER Me!

Dear Mr. or Mrs Goad (nod);

I Loved your Kickass magazine, so I decided to share my ideas & opinions SO FUCKING LISTEN UP! Dont have a cow, man, Im really a happy camper who likes to express my bitchin attitude on recycled (of course!) paper. So lets rock! Heard the new Nirvana or Pixies albumAAAA? Oh come on, dont kid yourself. You know you're an alternative musick fan, whether you care to admit it or not. By now, Im sure you wondering why your still fucking reading this or if this will be too abrasive when you wipe your smelly ass with it. Well Ill give you an answer, maybe youre one of those few people who actually give a shit about the people (animals, Im sorry!) who think your magazine isnt half bad or you're just bored. Go figure, huh!..duh-

I am a human oddity. Maybe I'm a closet freak. I dont know. Im too young & stupid to care. I hate everything & everyone who surrounds me. I unbearingly tolerate it and late at night, I go insane trying to figure out why.
Im not finished, turn over, scum->

There! I used my "forbidden" phrases against you ↓ Feel the 3rd!

I like the second one better. So cool!

This is where I open up, listen closely...

SIKE!

love + kisses...
XXX
BEAVER
[redacted]
Asheville, NC [redacted]

Lets become Punk Pen PaLs!

Scratch + Sniff

P.S. Give me some free shit, pleeease!!!!! (feces excluded no matter how tasty)

—Nov. 12, 1991—

Dearly bedeviled couple, I much enjoyed your magazine, especially minus ads. In many cases advertisements, aside from finance, are just another mundane way for an editor to show off his uniform or where his friends go shopping.
"Death in Bakersfield" & "Babies ARE Dirty" were well written and insightful. Having had my own experiences in Merle Haggard land, I know what it's like. Stockton, Fresno & Woods, among others speckled about, are other fine towns. They've all had their moments in the past which come to life with each drop of rotting bits of flesh from the skeletons in the closet.
Keep that cynicism biting it's Drano purifier for my veins.

Hi— Tues 1-14-92
Y'All Are A resurrection—
Do you offer subscriptions—?—
PLEASE reply to:
Jack Amburn
[redacted]
Ft LAUD, FLA- [redacted]

Here's another one of our illiterate readers, this time misspelling "red erection."

TYPOE CONTRIVERSEE RAGEZ ON!

Last issue, we arrogantly challenged readers to find typos....

Dear Folks

Liked your zine so much that I thought I'd send you copy of an image that popped into my head last July 4 while driving down the freeway in Atlanta. Hope this encourages you to proceed with more of the same.

Agnes is a pen name. The rednecks I work with might not appreciate my sense of irony. Feel free to include the work in your next effort. If you don't have a place for it, let me know and I'll pass it along someplace else.

Regards,

Ruth H. Schlesinger

[redacted]

ATLANTA, GA [redacted]

P.S. I'm over 40 and have *not* regretted not having children & have not changed my mind about going child-less in over 25 years!

November 23, 1991

Jim Goad, Editor
ANSWER Me!
6520 Selma Ave. Suite 1171
Hollywood, CA 90028

Dearest Jim,

I just had to write you and tell you what pleasure and joy *ANSWER Me!* has brought to my girlfriend and I. We can barely wait to get home from our menial jobs and cuddle up in bed, light some candles, put on some muzak, and pore over our copy of *ANSWER Me!*

We particularly enjoyed the piece on Holly Woodlawn and the rest of your wife Debbie's writing. However, "24 Hours on Sunset" is the mag's crowning triumph, with some of the best sports writing ever to grace a page (that stuff about livid boils and the collective unconscious is as good as it can get). I did want more from Debbie and the ladies' room, but I was delighted with the writing nevertheless. Real journalism always comes close to death, and what more fitting way to die than being mutilated by a Mercedes on the Strip.

However, we did find some typos. You misspelled the word "barrios" as "varrios" (p. 41). You also used the plural "mugs" when the singular form was required (p. 45). You put us up to it, bucky, so don't give us any of that "fuck you who gives a shit" anarchist/nihilist claptrap. Still, we appreciate that you dutifully smoked throughout production. Our compliments.

What differentiates this rag from mainstream pabulum and the alternative dribble is its individual prevalent voice — a humanist voice. Sound pathetic? Think again: why not throw *ANSWER Me!* into the public school system? Everything else people read today (sic) is tendentious blather anyway. I was pretty out of it through most of high school, so I would've read "People Ruin Everything" for all I cared.

Final note: we refused to put a return address on this thing in case you found it so revealing you'd be forced to firebomb our house. It's just better that we know where you live.

Shamelessly yours,

Ed & Edna, *ANSWER Me!* fans

Shamelessly wrong! 'Varrio' was a phoneticization, much as I spelled Saddam Hussein's country 'Eye-rack' (p. 37). Webster's stresses the hard 'b' in 'barrio,' and if I wanted our Anglo readers to mispronounce it, I wouldn't have needed to italicize it, since it's also an English word. 'Mugs' is from the line, "A wave of defecatory aromas mugs me. . . ." The word 'wave' (not 'aromas') is the noun referent, much as the word 'couple' is the referent in the sentence, "A dumb couple among thousands of smart ones is still dumb."

ear Mr. and Mrs. Goad, January 15, 1992

Fuck you too!

So I'm riding the "L" to the downtown Chicago campus for a class on dia issues (I'm a grad student at Northwestern's J-school) and I step off e train momentarily at the Main St. newsstand to find a market for a piece a doing on Chinese cooking schools. Shocking pink reverse type on lavender stantly draws my attention to your 'zine. As I permitted to call it that does using as little lingo makes me just another "fucking stupid" reader ? So anyway, I plunk down my $2 and I'm off to ~~waste away~~ piddle away the e on my commute being assailed by the most obnoxious piece of journalism ah right!) that I've ever purchased. *too cheap, if I'm into the mag. I would'n $3.*

So now that I've entered the ranks of your masochistic readership-- p me, beat me, make me read your rag -- I'm compelled to spread the word atter how vile it may be. I've made 20 copies of your statement of nt and I'm handing them out tomorrow during my magazine class. The fessor, Abe Peck, edited the Seed in the late '60's and contributes to ing Stone so I'm sure he'll get off on it too. Does the fact that you're g studied in a major journalism school mean you've already lost that ing edge even before the second issue?

Not that you really give a fuck what I think -- after all, I don't have balls to lay down serious cash for an ideal -- but I enjoyed the ine much more than I do other magazines costing twice as much with a bit larger than your. And Mrs. Goad has a cute double-jointed left so I would put up the bucks to be a charter subscriber. In fact, I've checkbook right here but, oops, no info on subscriptions. Joke's on uddy.

f you care to take my money in the future, you can reach me in the ive months at:

Jeremy Kemp
[redacted]
Evanston, IL 60201
[redacted]

Up yours,
Sincerely,

Bubba

Apr. 7, 1992

Mr. Goad,

I don't know if you're serious about the ANSWER Me! challenge, but if you are, then I'd like to call your attention to the misspelling of "barrio" in the second paragraph on page 15 of Vol. 1., No. 1. You misspelled it "varrio," which is how it's pronounced, but not how it's spelled.

You may be a smart psycho, but maybe you're not as smart a psycho as you think.

Anyways, do I win a prize? If not, then FUCK YOU!

Mine truly,

J. a. Rollins

See long-winded explanation above.

[redacted]

Inglewood, California 90302-3102
April 7, 1992

Jim Goad
Editor
Answer Me!
Goad To Hell Enterprises
6520 Selma Avenue, Suite 1171
Hollywood, California 90028

Dear Jim,

This is probably only one of many letters you have received pointing out perceived typographical errors in Vol. 1, No.1. You are right, I didn't find a single typo, I found several. *(COLON OR PERIOD)*

Page 2, under the heading of EDITORIAL INTERNS, the names are in alphabetical order except for "...Snapper Pitts . Caramela Philbis...".

Page 34, third column, 27. James Dean was driving a Porsche Speedster, not a sportster and not a convertible.

Page 42, lines 4 and 10, first column of the text. "... .9mm automatic...". .9mm is very very small and I don't know of any guns that have that small a bore. For mathematical purposes, 2.54 centimeters equals one inch and that is 25.4 millimeters. A 9mm weapon would have a bore of roughly .375 ~~inches, close to a .38~~ caliber weapon. A .9mm weapon would have a bore of about .03375 inches. That would make it about one seventh of the size of a 22 caliber weapon. An inch equivalent would be roughly 1/32nd. *(COMMA (VERY, VERY)) (1/10TH OF .375 = .0375) (HYPHEN (ONE-SEVENTH))*

Page 45, first column of text, line 11. " Lil' " should properly be Li'l. The apostrophe takes the place of missing letters. Li'l is the contraction for Little and the apostrophe is not used to take the place of silent e's. *(COMMA (TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES))*

Page 58, column two, line 18. lil' again. *(COLON OR CAPITAL "L")*

I'm lookin' forward to a typo free No. 2. *(HYPHEN (COMPOUND ADJECTIVE))*

Very truly yours,

Paul

F. PAUL RUSSELL, JR.

FPR/wfh

True genius carries a gun. It figures that a former Marine and current private detective (as F. Paul revealed himself in subsequent letters) would be the only one to find typos. We graciously accept this man of steel's corrections, but we couldn't resist pointing out the errors in his letter. Bloodied but unbowed, we brazenly assert that ANSWER Me! has fewer typos than any other L.A. publication, and we have a staff of two. We're still cocky enough to state that this issue has no ads, no bullshit, no typos.

Dear "Answer Me" —

I saw you guys on some local TV show today. I thought you were very cool people. I'd like to know how I can get your magazine. Please send me as much as you can.

I know that the only way society can improve is to end society. Why would anyone want to bring a baby to live in this cruel world? plus, little kids are scum.

Sincerely —

CHRIS FALVEY

[redacted]

NAPERVILLE, IL. [redacted]

Chris is referring to our appearance on Wally George's Hot Seat, where we argued that all pregnant women should be forced to abort. How can anyone in their right mind disagree?



Voice Mail

Hi—I picked up your magazine today. I live in Washington, D.C. My name is Ian Christie, and, um... I'm reaching out to tell you that I care.

Thanks, Ian. We don't.

Hey, guys—my name is Mark. Just picked up a copy of *ANSWER Me!* Fuckin' right on, man. Not callin' for any fuckin' other reason than to say it's, uh, pretty cool. Masturbated a few times to it. It's workin'. Thanks.

Let's just say we're glad this was an answering-machine message and not a letter.

Hey, Jim Goad—we dug ya mudda up, and we fucked her—her skeleton. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Number one, you stole that line from the infamous "Red" tapes. Number two, my mother's alive. Number three, I fucked her, and she's a lousy lay.

Page 44: 'Glamor' is spelled wrong. Should have a 'u.' Page 51: 'Hos.' Should be spelled 'H-o-e-s.' FUCK YOU!

Another jerkoff who thinks he found typos. 'Glamor' is the preferred American spelling, but I guess you've been reading too many women's magazines. 'Hos' is the plural of 'ho,' a slurred pronunciation of 'whore.' When you pluralize a word ending in 'o,' you don't need to add an 'e.' The words 'psychos' and 'typos' are examples. A 'hoe' is a garden tool—I thought you'd know that, since your mother fucked a barnyard pig and wound up with you. I like how you didn't leave a name or number. If you did, I'd track you down, stick my Uzi up your ass, and make you my ho.

You guys have a great magazine. I love it.

What's the matter, pussy motherfucker, afraid to leave your name and number—maybe I'm getting carried away.

Calling Dr. Satan

Does Anton Szandor LaVey Want Your Soul? No. He Has Much Better Taste Than That.

It's a cool Friday night in San Francisco, and people are everywhere in their exorbitant ugliness. They're sprinkling their oblong bodies with noxious perfumes. They're stuffing their throbbing little gullets with hot, oily foods. Their faces slacken in cretinous simplicity as they chug-a-lug one martini after the next. They're cruising the city for a quick score, seeking to drain their genitals of mucilaginous goop.

We circle a restaurant district in a futile quest for free parking. Block after block, and not an inch of curbside space. Cars zip past us in a hellish stream of lonely red taillights. TOO MANY FUCKING PEOPLE!

A thumbnail-sized spider scuttles across the windshield. Its moonlit body assumes the hue of white chocolate. Quietly effortless, its balletic presence rises above the depressing humanoid muck.

So does the glowering aura of Anton Szandor LaVey, whom we meet in a French restaurant after throwing up our hands and paying for parking. Accompanied by biographer/sidekick Blanche Barton, LaVey cuts quite the figure in his black suit and gangster hat. His severe Transylvanian features compensate for the innocuous, pasty-faced nobodies who fill the dining room. Unlike most neo-pagans, he's charming and doesn't smell bad.

Over appetizers, we discuss the global clump of human mulch, serial killer Carl Panzram, self-fulfilling surnames such as 'Goad,' and how to get rid of one's enemies. While lapping up onion soup, I make a passing remark about my boundless contempt for Homo sapiens.

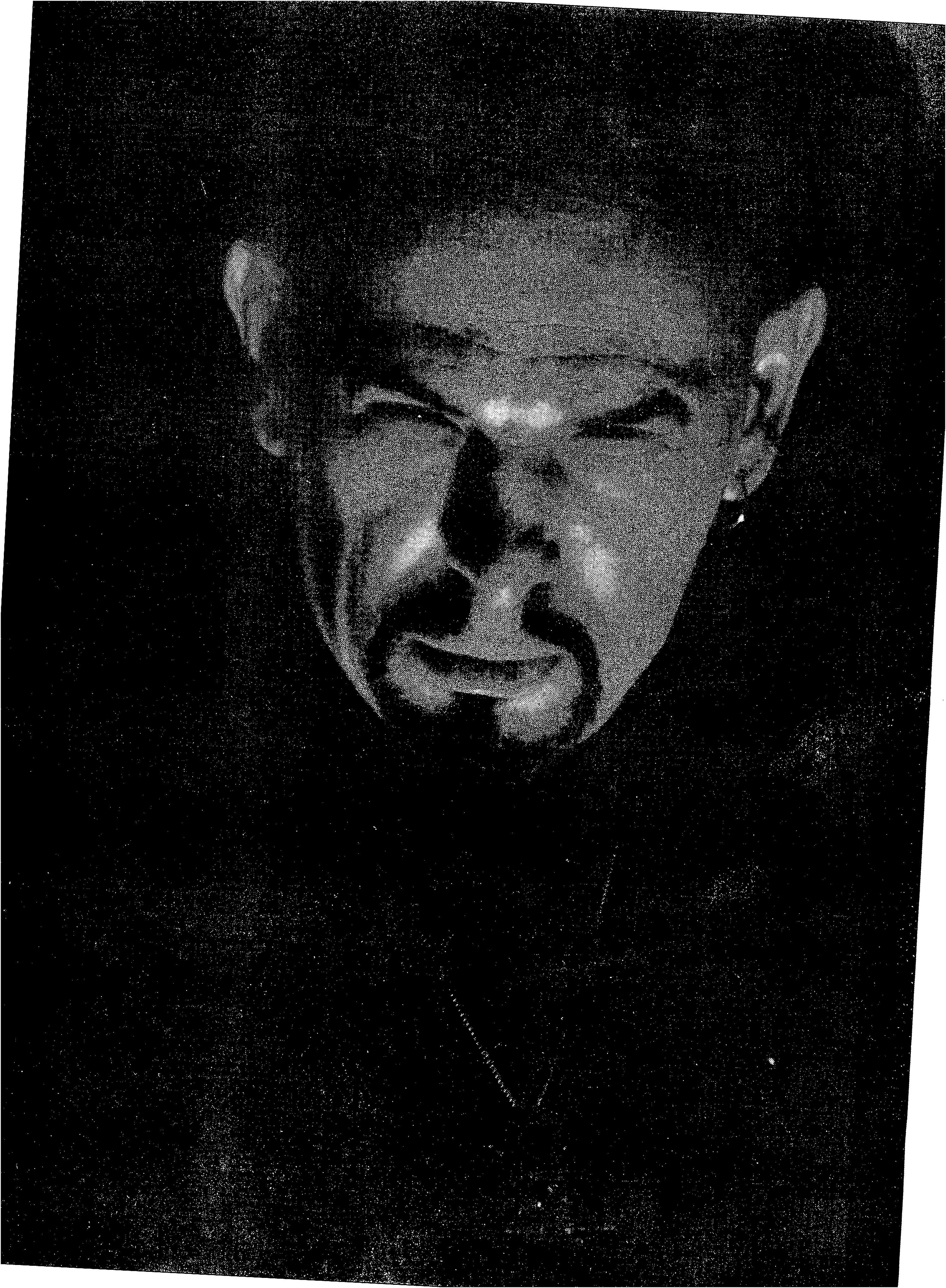
"I can see we're going to get along," he says with the faint tremors of a smile.

Why the fuck not? A friend of the devil is a friend of mine, and Anton Szandor LaVey might as well be Satan's press agent. More than anyone else, he brought Satanism out of the closet. Blending what he called "nine parts social respectability [and] one part outrage," he founded the Church of Satan in 1966. The self-proclaimed "Black Pope" has counted among his followers Sammy Davis, Jr., Kenneth Anger, and Jayne Mansfield. He also penned *The Satanic Bible,* a lean, nasty tome first published in 1969. But most people, since they can't read, would probably know him as the guy who played the devil in *Rosemary's Baby.*

The details of his past have been disputed by lettuce-smoking navel-gazers, but I'll accept his version: He was born April 11, 1930, in Chicago. An only child, LaVey sensed that he was innately different from his peers. Genetically Satanic, he had a "vestigial tail" surgically removed during adolescence. In his teens, he worked as a lion tamer and keyboardist. While pumping the ivories as a tent-show organist, he noticed that the same pious-faced men who attended revival meetings also drooled like apes at strip shows. Later, while working as a crime photographer, LaVey toured the grisliest, basest nooks of human depravity. He concluded that if there were a God, he was indifferent to human suffering.

LaVey came to believe that any religion which denies man's carnality was doomed to fail, describing Christianity as "getting people to feel guilty for breathing and charging them for the oxygen they breathe." Declaring that "life is the great indulgence—death, the great abstinence," he crystallized a philosophy which rams a hairy fist up the clenched sphincter of all "white-light" religions. While other belief systems deal in the ego's dampening or annihilation, Satanism attempts to nourish it, preaching anti-mystical rationalism and creative vengeance.

Acknowledging that humans have a Jungian need for ritual, LaVey melded applied psychology with appropriately dark theatrics. He doesn't



accept "Satan" as the persona is understood in Christian theology—it would be rather stupid to worship a fallen angel whose damnation is sealed at an omnipotent creator's hands. For LaVey, Satan *is* the creator, or at least a convenient symbol of nature's dark, randomly brutal forces. The devil's a lusty archetype, a superhero of the liberated id.

As leader of the "Alien Elite," LaVey promotes a pruning of the gene pool through "bright supremacy." Far from espousing noble savagery, he advocates strengthening the police to keep all you assholes in line. He yearns for a future of android slavery and self-contained environments. In a statement which won our hearts, he claims that "population is the biggest problem facing us now."

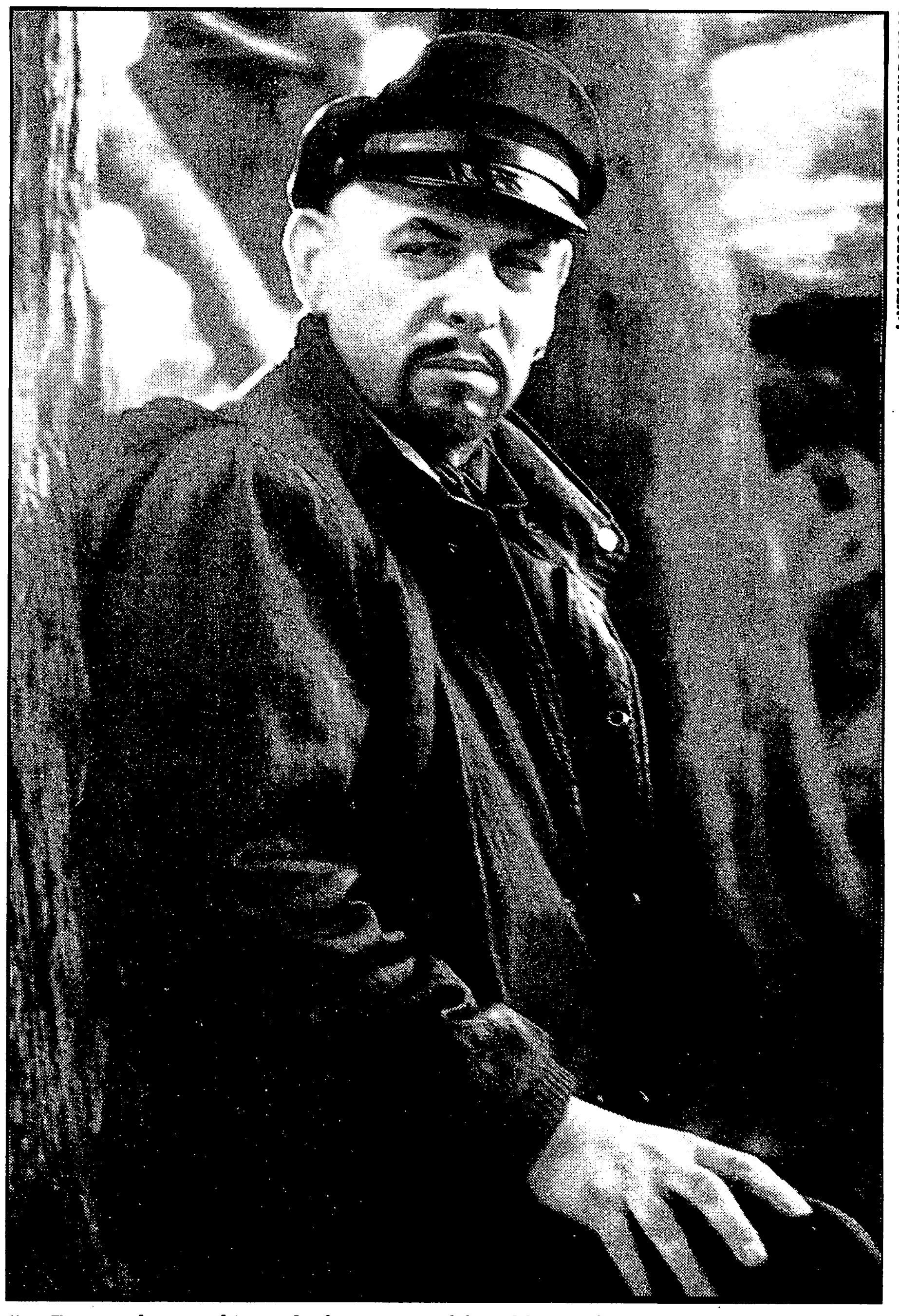
After chowing down on frog's legs and chocolate mousse, we were directed to his black Victorian mansion, a harsh edifice which nearly recoils from the houses around it. As we settled into his parlor after feeling our way down an unlit, tomblike entrance, *Herr Doktor* indulged us an hour-long taped interview. I expected him to sound like Bela Lugosi, but he spoke in the measured tones of a Midwestern barley farmer, an accent subversive in its unassuming normalcy. He closed his eyes as he retreated within his pinkish dome to fetch his answers, raising his lids at the end of each soliloquy.

He then wowed us with an organ concert featuring "Yes, We Have No Bananas"; "Mister Jack and Missus Jill" from the all-midget epic *The Terror of Tiny Town*; Bach's "Toccata and Fugue in D Minor"; Wagner's "*Die Walküre*"; sundry circus ditties, Sousa marches, and spaghetti-western themes; and Nat King Cole's "Answer Me."

An unscripted conversation went on until five a.m. As I sipped coffee from a pentagram-emblazoned mug, we covered such occultic topics as the pyromaniac film *The Flaming Urge*, miniature-pony farms, and SCTV's Shmenge Brothers. Basking in LaVey's genteel misanthropy, I found him to be keen-witted and palpably repulsed by a devolving, illiterate populace. I realized why he's considered a threat—beneath his shaven pate lies a formidable brain.

But you can't trust anything I'm saying, because when I wasn't looking, LaVey slipped some demons—thirteen or fourteen of them, I'm not sure—into my soul. Every Friday night since the interview, after ordering out for Thai food, Debbie and I perform ritual murder. So far, we've bagged six preschoolers, two metalheads, and a pregnant woman who was waiting at a bus stop. We recite the Our Father backwards at midnight, and Satan appears to counsel us. He even got us cheaper car insurance!

I'm brainwashed, you see, hoodwinked by the Great Liar. I'm a Satanic zombie, a Mephistophelean marionette controlled by dark angels I never should have fucked with. I started out as a journalist, but now I'm the devil's mouthpiece. To all ye who dare tread this perditious path, take heed: Satan ensnares minds with his seductively flawless logic. You MUST close your eyes and ears to logic, or it will DEVOUR you!


LAVEY PHOTOS & DRAWING BY NICK BOUGAS

"... To me, the word 'people' is not a positive thing. It is very much a derogatory expression."

Why does Satan get so much bad press these days?

Well, because, I would say a lot of it is the *threat* of Satanism is coming closer and closer to the surface. And it's nothing that can simply be vanquished as a paper tiger, as a convenience, or a theological need, or some kind of entertainment device, but it's becoming now a very real force, philosophy, concept to be reckoned with. It's something that holds a mirror up to not only collective identities, but what people like to think of as individual identities. And it's overlapping, naturally, into many areas of endeavor that people never thought something called "Satanism" could. By that, I mean music, aesthetics of all kinds, literature, popular culture, and it threatens to become something that is, in fact, very threatening to not only the present economy,

unless it modifies its machinations to fit, as well as to the social order as we have known it for many, many years. Probably centuries.

Comment on the concept of equality.

Well, naturally—I say "naturally" as a Satanist—I don't believe in equality. I don't believe there's anything equal. If you're going to dissect it or analyze it, even in the sense of quality control or something that's seen under a microscope or if a spectrographic analysis is made, there are going to be tiny differences in everything, even if they're rubber-stamp-type things or mass-production things. Nothing is really equal. And it might be quite similar, but when we're dealing, as I assume you're asking, in human beings, very few human beings are equal. The most equal of human beings, I would say, would be on the lowest level. Because there are, I mean, God must have loved them, 'cause he made so many of them. But when you get higher up on the evolutionary scale—or social order, whichever you prefer—you're going to find more differentiation in human beings as you ascend. And then, of course, the higher you go, the more *un*equal you find those from the ones at the bottom. What is usually meant by 'equality' is really 'common denominators.'

But I feel that the question that would normally be put to me would be, "Well, who are you to say who is equal and who is not equal, or who's superior and who is inferior?" And my only answer to that would be simply based on the product or the impact that these individuals have on the cosmology as we know it, our world. And the contrast between the performers and the audience—those who are the performers in life are certainly not equal to the audience, who occupies a much vaster space than the performers onstage. That isn't to say that everyone has to be a performer, but certainly, as far as inequality is concerned, the performer, or the stimulator, as I like to call him, is someone who does deserve a little more, if you want to call it, subsidizing, than the person who needs stimulation and gains stimulation from that performer. As far as I'm concerned, the greatest need of human life is stimulation. That allows these spores in this great yeast mold to know that they're alive, that they're actually functioning. They *feel* something. The stimulation is sort of like a cattle prod or a mild shock. Anything will do to give these people an awareness that they are indeed alive—they have a functioning nervous system. I call them people because, to me, the word 'people' is not a positive thing. It is very much a derogatory expression.

And the second-most-vital need would be identity. Obviously, collective identities—that is, herd mentalities—seem to be in the majority. And of the herd mentality, people in the world—and again, I use that derogatorily—*people*—there are very few, or fewer, certainly, that are not collective in their identities. In other words, they haven't gotten their identities from something that's been prepackaged or mass-produced, but they've found something a trifle different to get more of a *personal* identity. And this is not to say that it's less important to them than it is to the people, but it still, to me, is probably the second-most-important human need.

And getting back to equality, or staying with equality, rather: The whole concept, the entire concept of equality is simply one of wishful thinking or flight of fancy that, very much like the concept of reincarnation, will allow the lowest to feel that they are equal to the highest. And the concept of equality, with that in mind, is designed to keep the lowest satisfied, to serve as pap, or serve as a sort of cosmetic indulgence or enticement to the lowest so that they, too, can feel that they are of the same stuff as the highest.

We've been talking for a while, and you seem well-mannered and reasoned. When are you going to rip my heart out and eat it?

Oh, about sacrifice and that sort of thing? Well, I believe in sacrifice, but not necessarily on an unlawful basis, or one by which you would be apprehended, convicted, tried, and prosecuted or executed. This isn't to say that I'm against human sacrifice, it's just simply that I'm against the entanglements or the punishments or the social *inconveniences* that [laughs] performing human sacrifices might entail. So, when I talk about symbolic human sacrifices, I say it with the awareness that we are living in a world that frowns upon a Darwinian sort of thinning-out of the species, so there *are* ways of sacrificing, performing human sacrifices, without necessarily going out with a butcher knife and killing people.

One of these would be to demoralize or to, in some way, fragment the potential victim or victims into feeling their worthlessness or becoming aware of their own uselessness. And by demoralization and the ensuing, I guess you could call it, *breakdown* of these kinds of people, then you are in fact performing some sort of human sacrifice. But not cutting the hearts out of people, and if there's any of that sort of thing to be done, it would be certainly ill-advised to boast of it or to speak of it.

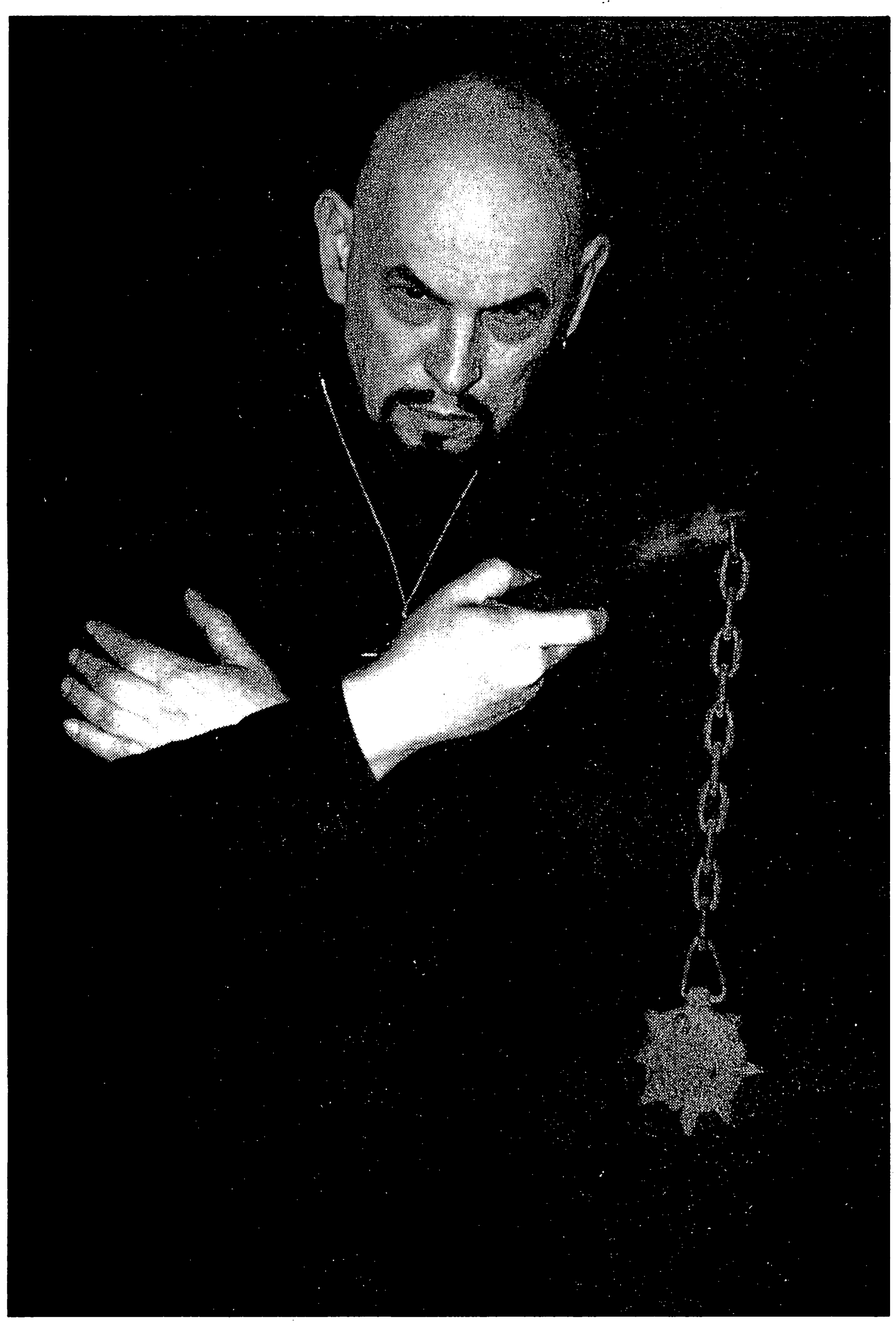
I would say that every society has its anger and hatreds, boiling rages, either individually or collectively. War is a perfect example of that, and that's an area that intrigues me and perhaps titillates me, even, because it gives entire countries a chance to advocate, if not cutting the hearts out of human victims, certainly shooting them down in wholesale lots or blowing them up. And yet, one need not feel any pangs of conscience when there's a convenient enemy during times of war by doing this sort of thing. So, when we are drawing comparisons about human sacrifices



on a personal scale and on a mass scale, we certainly realize, or must realize, that if these sort of things are done on a grand enough scale, such as war, they're perfectly acceptable. So it's, as I assume you mean, on a personal level that we're treading on a little more, uh, controversial ground [laughs].

Based on what you can glean from the New Testament, give a psychoanalytic profile of Jesus. What type of human was he?

Yeah, that's a question that I find interesting in that it changes as far as the needs of the believers are concerned. And if, for example, we're living in the eighteenth century, the psychological profile of a Jesus type of divinity would be different than the psychological profile that would be analyzed in the twentieth or the twenty-first century. The current trend—I say trend—is to accept a Jesus type or a Christ figure as having some sort of strong drives, a great deal of anger and perhaps rage, and the "New Jesus," in the sense of the Second Coming type of Christ, would, in all probability, be the kind of guy that would go out and kill a lot of people rather than one who would die on a cross. And that would simply be because of changing needs, changing myth-needs and needs that fit, of course, the social order as it stands. I think the name would not necessarily change, just as often it remains the same throughout the centuries, but there is a distinct possibility—and that's why I use the term "the Second Coming"—there is a distinct possibility that the need, the myth-need for a new Christ will be transferred to one name that is more conducive to outrageous behavior, or anger, or revenge, or retaliation, or justice in the old sense of *lex talionis* [the law of retaliation], and that would be Satan. And that would provide the Christ figure, but in an updated version by a different name. So really, it's just a question of finding a need and filling it.



"From time to time, give them REAL pain...."

I guess the gist of the question is, a human being who would say, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," somebody who would say you have to give up all worldly goods and put on sackcloth—give your opinion of the driving forces in a person like that.

I can only see that as an extreme form of masochism, whether it's self-realized or unrealized. To me, Christianity as it has been practiced or advocated is a life-denying, rather than life-affirming, thing. It has been said before, and I'll say it again, reiterate, that wearing a cross around one's neck—the cross being the object of the execution or the destruction of the godhead or the spiritual leader—is no different than wearing an electric chair around your neck if he had been electrocuted or a gas chamber around your neck if he died by cyanide eggs. So, venerating the object of one's hero's or role model's death, to me, is rather silly. It always has been. And as far as Satanic "atrocities" go, there's nothing that can match a child's first impression when it walks into a room or becomes aware for the first time that what it is seeing on the wall is either a painting or a plaster statue of a man with his chest ripped open, with his entrails coming out, and with his brow torn by what appears to be barbed wire or thorns, that sort of thing. That's the stuff of which hack-and-slash movies are made. So, I don't ever want to hear anything about Satanic horror flicks, or any kind of supposed atrocities that are poisoning the minds of young people, because these kind of horrors have been presented by Christianity for centuries to young people, and it's probably the only *taste*, as a matter of fact, they've got of these kind of things for a long time, until Hollywood.

So, I guess, would you be saying that Jesus had maybe a *sexual* need to be crucified? He got off on the humiliation and torture?

Oh, of course, yeah. I feel with that kind of masochist, rejection, destruction, I mean, self-destruction, and punishment are definitely the things that he would get off on. And the jokes that we hear and we have heard pretty well sum all that up.

Like, one of my favorites is: The guys are standing in the doorway of their little house watching Jesus being whipped and beaten with a big cross on his back up to the hill where he's going to be crucified. They see his lips moving, and one of the guys says to the other, "What's he saying?" And he says, "Well, I don't know." He says, "Why don't you go up to where you can hear him?" He says, "I don't know whether I should go up there or not. I don't want to get hit myself." And the guy says, "Well, go on, it's not gonna hurt. Maybe you can get an idea. He's saying *something*. I don't know what he's saying." So finally, the guy goes up and sort of quickly sticks his head in front of Jesus before he gets completely past the row of houses, and he hears him singing, *"IIIII love a pa-rade...."*

It's one of those sort of things. And it's like the other one, where he's up on the cross, and he's motioning to Peter and trying, mumbling, to get Peter to come to him. And Peter's out there in a crowd of centurions, and they're throwing rocks at Jesus, and they're trying to torment him as much as possible. And finally, Peter inches his way through the crowd and gets to the foot of his mentor. And he says, "What, what my Lord? What? What is it you have to say to me?" And Jesus looks down at him and he says, "Peter, Peter—I can see your house from here."

And so, there was no great problem Christ had, I mean, if you're talking about psychologically. His only problem was what the rest of the world saw in his problem and subsequently took as a role model for their *own* masochism. But I don't think he, if he was as he is portrayed, felt that he was unjustly put upon. He probably felt that without this martyrdom, without this kind of masochistic satisfaction, it wouldn't have all been worth it. Of course, that's not what we find in latter-day interpretations, psychological interpretations, of Jesus. And I can understand the reinterpretation, because it is essentially to create a more humanized man out of Jesus, one who is not a masochistic martyr, but one who was really put upon and unjustly maligned, and as in the case of some figures of history, like Wilhelm Reich, really crucified. And I think it's more of a convenience to psychologically see him as that after the fact. It's not like we suddenly have discovered psychoanalysis, because Freud has been around a long time now. It's taken a while to sort of catch up to the fact that maybe—or the supposition, it's not a fact, certainly, but the supposition—that Christ may have been a real ballsy guy and really was struck down in the prime of his life. Or somebody that was essentially Promethean and went against the grain. That could well be. Of course, I don't accept the reality of Christ as a living man. I accept only the reality of a myth-need, and the Christ figure to me was something that just sort of fit at the time it was promulgated, and he has been historically accepted sort of as a given, contrary to historical evidence that he never even existed.

Let's clear up one of the biggest misconceptions about the Church of Satan—by "Satan," of course, you mean an anthropomorphic being with horns and a tail, right?

To us, Satan is not an anthropomorphic being. Satan is certainly an anthropomorphic *image*, though, which is a little different from an actual being. And the anthropomorphic image of Satan is pretty well fashioned in that it is bestial as opposed to ethereal, or cherubic, or patriarchal, or avuncular. Satan *is* seen as somewhat of a dashing, or rakish, or, perhaps, feral animal type of image. And, obviously, these depictions are something very much like talismanic magic conserved to reinforce the concepts of the philosophical ideas behind Satanism. So, I wouldn't do anything to dispel that image. Satan as a divinity or as a deity with a pitchfork and a tail and cloven hooves and a beard and all that is certainly more viable to imagine than Satan as a guy that looked like a bespectacled accountant that was sitting behind a desk, even though there have been deviations in the public image of Satan.

Sometimes a Satanic figure has been depicted as a very heavy, or



corpulent, individual with lewd sort of features—the kind of appearance you might associate with one of the Caesars. And other times, Satan has been seen, certainly *many* times, as a woman, or in the body of a sexy woman. And other times, Satan has been seen as a sort of grey or wizened old wizard with little hairs sprouting out of either side of his head, the sort of alchemist look about him. So, there have been other interpretations that are anthropomorphic that do work. And yet, the one we keep returning to, anthropomorphizing Satan, is the guy that looks like the devil, as devils are known. But this isn't a person, we believe, that's out there somewhere just sort of waiting to be called forth and appear in a puff of flame and smoke, but rather someone that walks among us and perhaps even walks *with* the person who is dedicated to the concept of Satan, so that when someone would ask, "Have you ever seen Satan?" that person might be able to say, "Yes. Every time I get up in the morning and shave and look in the mirror. Or every time I fix my hair or put on my lipstick," [laughs] or something like that, if it happens to be a woman. And that would be just as valid an answer for the anthropomorphic concept.

One of the most profound things that I read that you said was that truth never sets you free, that doubt is much more likely to at least *lead* to freedom. Can you say why that is? 'Cause when I interviewed Tom Metzger, the White Aryan guy, he said, "I don't believe in equality. When they say all men are created equal, I laugh, because nobody in power believes that." And something just clicked. And the same thing happened when I read that, that doubt is—

—That's right. I agree completely with that, that no one in power believes that. *No* one in power believes that. They would never be able to admit it except to their cronies, perhaps, in closed rooms. If they were all to get together, I know pretty much what kind of notes they would compare. And believe me, there would be some across-the-board similarities, and one of them would be that there is no such thing as equality. And their constituents, their disciples, would not necessarily be told what they are in public interviews for an audience.

About doubt setting you free...

Yeah, as far as the truth setting one free. Truth is very much a subjective thing. Because there are different kinds of truths, just like there are different kinds of love. I believe truth and love is, or are, words and terms that can almost be used interchangeably, because they bear



The Nine Satanic Statements

1. Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence.
2. Satan represents vital existence instead of spiritual pipe dreams.
3. Satan represents undefiled wisdom instead of hypocritical self-deceit.
4. Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it instead of love wasted on ingrates.
5. Satan represents vengeance instead of turning the other cheek.
6. Satan represents responsibility to the responsible instead of concern for psychic vampires.
7. Satan represents man as just another animal--sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all-fours--who, because of his "divine spiritual and intellectual development," has become the most vicious animal of all.
8. Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification.
9. Satan has been the best friend the Church has ever had, as He has kept it in business all these years.

this attribute, or this quality, of, "Which kind of love do you mean?" Or in other words, you could say, "What kind of truth do you mean?" There's the kind of love that's romantic love, maternal or paternal love, filial love, love as an aesthetic expression, like I love a particular object of art or a painting, a design of an automobile, or something like that. And truth is very much to me the same sort of commodity. Truth is able to be seen as the facts as we know hard facts to mean—applied, hard, demonstrable evidence can be said to be the closest thing to the truth. At least, to me it is.

Then there is, of course, more subjective truth, which can be altered or manipulated according to the dictates or the needs of what truth is supposed to be. Propagandists are experts at that sort of thing. So, if we are to believe the truth as we read it in print, or in factual evidence supposedly given by vested interests, should we really accept that as truth simply because it is put down by experts? We're getting to a sensitive area with me, because I detest experts, or so-called experts. I distrust experts. Anyone that has the word 'expert' after their name immediately, to me, conveys the impression of someone who has just sort of hung out his shingle and become self-styled, whatever. And I feel that the truth coming from these kind of people is absolutely invalid.

But I should get to this other definition of the truth, and that is that the real truth that matters is the truth that matters for *you*. That fills, or fulfills, your particular personal needs. And that could be very negative when we're talking about masses of people or humanity in general, because what their needs for truth happen to be are fulfilled in the *National Enquirer* and TV. That's as much truth as they need to know, and, of course, that *is* truth to them. And if it works, then that's true enough, as true as they need it to be. But it's a rather important point to me, being a Satanist, looking at these things like truth from a Satanic perspective. Do we *really* want to give these people the truth, because if they had the truth, what would they do with it? How would they react or respond to it? Would they be able to *live* with the truth? I don't think they would. So, is it really fair to say that the people that print things like the *National Enquirer* are fogging people's brains? What they're really doing is dealing in fogged brains and brains that are scrambled to start with, and they're telling them the truth according to the gospel of what their particular role models seem to put forth.

The meaning it had for me, too, was that it seems like the people who are most convinced that they're right are frequently, or almost always, the dumbest people. Maybe the beginning of intelligence is the ability to question what you believe in.

Yeah, and the most righteous, the most self-righteous people, I have found, are not only the stupidest people, but the people who want to believe as the truth what most likely isn't the truth, but simply the truth that fits their own needs. Now, their needs generally are to destroy anything that's beautiful, anything that's fine, anything that's of quality, anything that's Promethean or pioneering, anything that's worth preserving—in short, they're a pretty loutish crew, and anything that's of value, they really want to rip apart. They will elect a person to office that in the first place is a Hobson's choice—who is, perhaps, the lesser of two evils. And in the second place, once they have elected that person into office, then they'll spend the rest of the time, the remaining time of their attention span with this person, trying to destroy him. So I can't speak too highly of the discriminatory powers of the masses, because they have their own idea of the truth, and they have their own idea of what's right and self-righteous. And what makes them feel good, or better, or more right, is what they're gonna opt for in every case.

And as a Satanist, I prefer to attract or to draw out the kind of people that don't have to wear the mantle of a good guy or self-righteousness but are willing, as you expressed in your own editorial views, willing to stand forth and say, "Look—you know, I'm *not* a nice guy. I'm not Simon Pure. I'm not trying to save the world. I don't want to be a messiah. I don't wish to pin any good-guy badges on myself. I just want to say things the way I feel it, and the way I want others at least to give me a chance to say them. And if they don't want to, they can tell me I'm full of shit or whatever, but at least I've had the opportunity to express these views without the sanctimonious, hypocritical whitewash or varnish or sugarcoating of trying to say, 'Well, I'm trying to build a better world by saying these things.'"

Isn't the fight against stupidity a losing battle?

Yeah. To me, I've written my list of the seven deadly sins—how many of them were there?

Blanche: I think there were nine of them.

Anton: Nine. Yeah. I sometimes forget myself. It's like the old cliché, "I only work here [general laughter]." But the Nine Satanic Sins—the first one, the top of the list, is Stupidity. [*Note: The others are Pretentiousness, Solipsism, Self-Deceit, Herd Conformity, Lack of Perspective, Forgetfulness of Past Orthodoxies, Counterproductive Pride, and Lack of Aesthetics.*] To me, stupidity is the stuff that is needed, obviously, in the world, and the Christian concept would be to say, "Well, we're all sinners. We are all born or conceived in sin." To me, I would say, "*You* are all sinners by Satanic standards. You are conceived in sin, and you are able to plod through your lives in sin, and you will always be sinners." But to me, the great sin is stupidity. So, you could just, instead of the word 'sin,' substitute it with stupidity: "You are conceived in stupidity, you're born into stupidity, you live out your lives in stupidity. So, therefore, you *are* sinners." And I would accuse them, just as a Christ figure would accuse the minions, his minions, of being sinners, I would accuse these minions of being sinners, too.

That's a better concept of original sin, I think: You're born stupid.

Yeah, I think that's very well put. That's a much better concept of original sin, that it's stupidity.

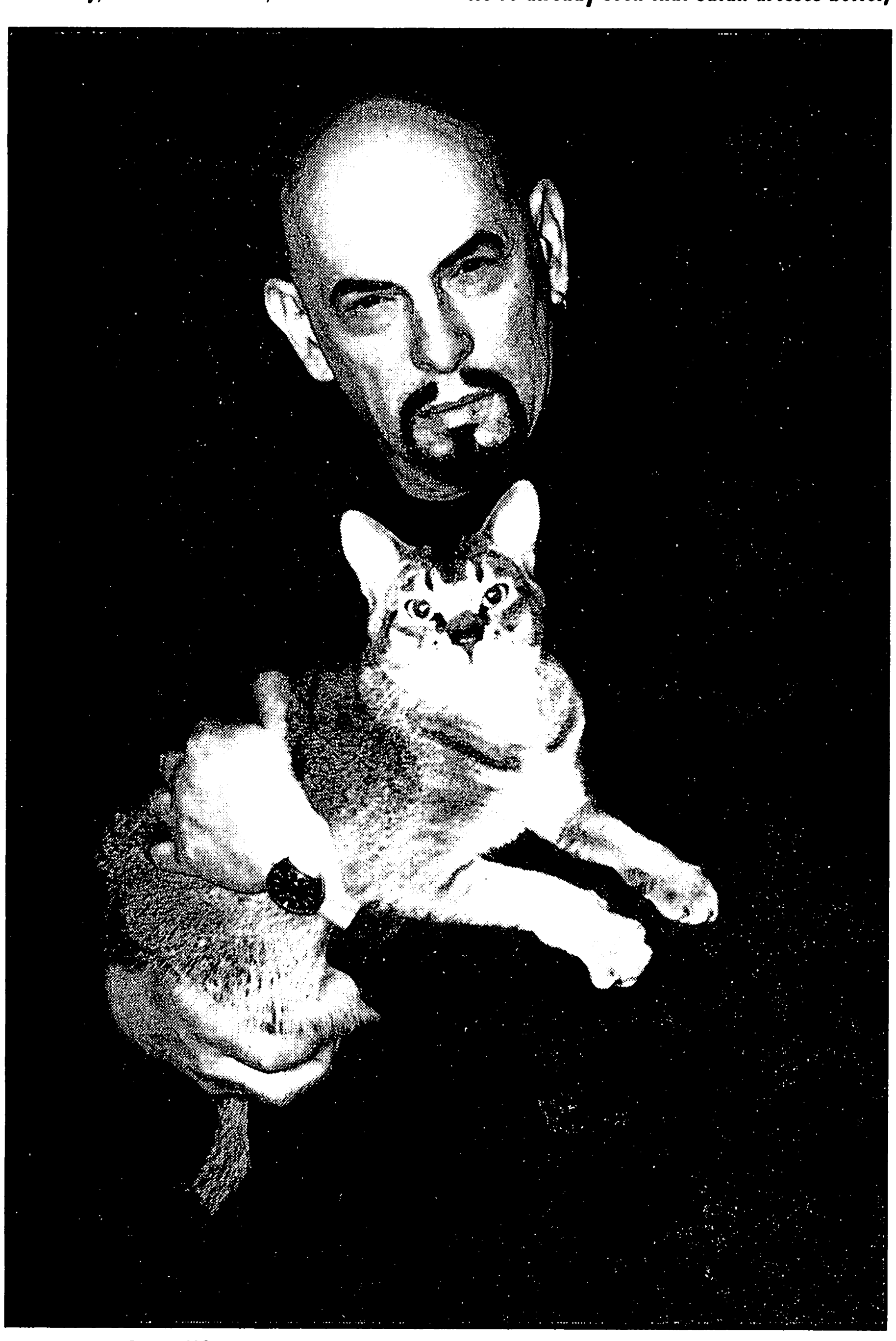
Blanche: Yeah. Born into ignorance and work from there. If you *choose* to.

Anton: I mean, I've been quoted as saying, "The world is full of stupes," and I only started saying that after I sort of got tired of saying, "The world is full of creeps." And there will *always* be stupid people. There's a *need* for stupid people. The stupider, the better. When Nietzsche said that man, or the overman, must be evil*er*, I would say, "If that's the case, then the common man must be stupid*er*." Constantly stupider. And this degenerative process is what we're seeing right NOW, more than at any time in the history of the world, and if it is allowed to run rampant without an alternative or two or three to at least run interference for it, then it's going to envelop the planet, and we're going to be a dead planet. But that's not going to happen, because natural law will always prevail, despite man's efforts to quash it. So there will always be something like a Satan or a Satanic concept to run interference for this raging overabundance of stupidity.

We've already seen that Satan dresses better, dances better than God—uh, is he funnier than God, too? How does humor aid the Satanist?

I think a Satanic figure that would be humorless would be intolerable. The old adage that "I laughed that I might not cry," I think [laughs] applies to Satan, or the image of Satan, or the concept of Satan. Because, concerning the sorrows of Satan, his dismay at seeing this fucked-up kind of world, would necessitate that he *had* to have a sense of humor or some kind of concrete outlet for his dismay or for what would be devastating to him. Because how could such a figure or figurehead be able to live in such a grim world?

I've been accused of being an unhappy person deep down inside—a miserable, cynical, misanthropic person. I admit that I'm misanthropic. I admit that I'm cynical. And I do admit that I'm often rather miserable, perhaps, to other people. But if I am miserable at times, it's only because, as Sartre said, "Hell is other people." Because *they* make me miserable. And I'm actually a very happy person. I want to be a life-loving, happy person. I just happen to be living in a death-seeking, misery-loving world.



"I want to be a life-loving, happy person. I just happen to be living in a death-seeking, misery-loving world."

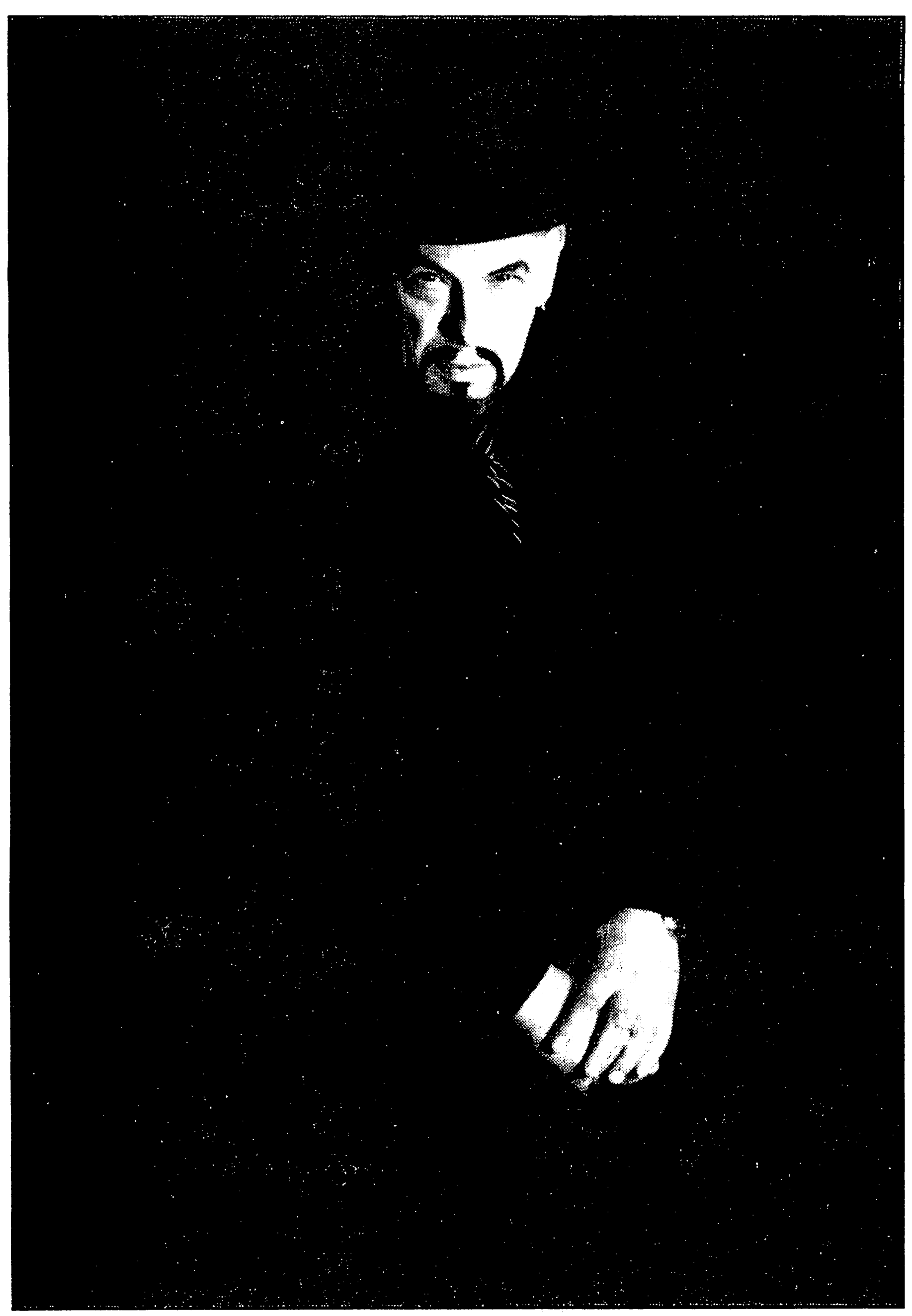
I've found the most superficially happy-go-lucky people seem to be in a constant state of denial of reality.

Blanche: Yeah, there's also that sanctimony if you compare the images of the white-light religions with Satanic images. Satan never allows himself sanctimony.

Where does this need to deny the way things are come from? Is it that if people admitted how shitty things were, they'd just fall apart? I have trouble understanding that myself—what's this need to gloss over things? If you know deep down that it's fucked-up, why do you need to think otherwise? What's the motivation? Is it just an elaborate defense mechanism?

Blanche (to Anton): On the part of most people: Why do they watch Oprah Winfrey and forget about what's happening to the rest of the world, hmm?

Anton: Because I call it "masochistic America." Or you could say, "the masochistic Western world." It varies in some degrees from nation to nation—not much anymore. It's because their lives are so barren of any personal meaning that the surrogate lives of these shows, of these ongoing digressions, become as real to them, or more real, than their own lives could possibly be. And so, the nature of the show, the nature of the program says it all. Their lives wouldn't be complete without the stimulation. Again, I use the word 'stimulation': of chaos, and disharmony, and problems. There is no way that they could possibly be happy unless they were miserable. And, of course, their miseries are small miseries. Tiny miseries. That still gives them plenty of time to make *other* people



"Satan is seen as somewhat of a dashing, or rakish, or, perhaps, feral animal type of image."

miserable. Which is, of course, what they do. So, if they had big enough *real* problems, then they wouldn't have time to make other people miserable. And they wouldn't, perhaps, be as misery-loving.

But they just get stimulation in doses that are palatable. Just enough to satisfy them. By that, I mean eustress, rather than distress. Fun fear, rather than real terror. I think that it would be fun sometimes—I mean, not fun for *them*—but, certainly, it would be stimulating for me occasionally to see how these people react under true distress. Because I think that's the only thing that takes them away from their soaps and their theater of disturbance that they seem to crave. And when something really happens, like an earthquake or a plane crash or a disaster or a catastrophe, then it's no longer eustress. It really gives them what they want, but double or triple in spades. And they can't deal with that. And that's when you really see them for what they are, the frightened little creatures that they really are. They want so badly to live in this gradual decline, this gradual imperative to die, but on *their* terms, sort of like the epicurean masochist that says, "Hit me here. No—a little higher. Not quite so high, a little bit further down than that. But no, no, that's too hard." And that's the way I sort of feel most people are—they crave eustress, fun fear. And when they get into real *dis*tress, it's the sort of thing they can't take. They might be able to dish out to others, but they can't take it themselves.

The only thing people generally respond to in the state of distress that they seem to crave, but not be able to cope with when it finally comes, is fear. And pain. Now, I don't mean fun fear, but I mean TERROR. I mean real fear. And pain—by pain, I mean physical pain. I mean pain like TORTURE. And I believe that most people need periodic doses of fear and pain in order to sort of reinforce the meaning of life for them. They even have coined the term, "No pain, no gain." And, "The sale begins when the customer says, 'No.'" And the whole concept of business procedure, where you're fighting these interminable odds at all times, and if the door slams in your face, it's a victory, not a defeat. And all success courses and the aggressiveness seminars.

Blanche: Yeah: *Winning Through Intimidation.*

Anton: And winning-through-intimidation techniques are proof of this. That most people really respond to what is most abrasive and what is most painful and what is most inconvenient. And here's the real, to me, the blow-off on the whole thing is, without these things—like, these inconveniences, these pains, these turmoils—there'd be no security. That is, verily, their security. It is their habit, it is their security. So, take those things away from them, and you do them a disservice. From time to time, give them REAL pain, and real distress, rather than eustress, and it will be like a rejuvenation for them, a shot in the arm. That's why wars, catastrophes, disasters, are necessary from time to time. Speaking as a sort of devil [laughs], if I were in that position, I would say, "Well, we've gotta have a catastrophe here, a disaster here from time to time, an earthquake, a tidal wave," whatever it is. A war. Something to really get people shaken up.

I'd like you to comment on what we were talking over dinner about seeing a paradox—that what society would consider the most evil outcasts are invariably the most considerate type of people. For instance, Debbie's boss is a guy who has a business called [SELF-CENSORSHIP! SELF-CENSORSHIP!], and he speaks in this real glazed voice on the answering machine: "I hope this finds you in a happy and healing place." And he's a ruthless bastard! What is the principle behind that, that the most seemingly good people are often the most ruthless—evil in a truly negative sense? And Russ Meyer, yourself, and other people that society in general might consider evil are the most considerate and accommodating type of people. How does that work? I want to understand the physics behind that.

Because they don't have to cover up their

meanness or their pettiness or their insecurity or their true *dastardly* nature. Because it's all upfront. I mean, somebody like Russ Meyer—obviously, he's putting out material, putting out a product, that makes no pretense about being enlightening or redeeming or in some way a form of salvation, unless you want to say it's salvation for poor, repressed souls that need to be released. And, obviously, people who are not wearing good-guy badges are more upfront, and they can *afford* to be nicer, because they're getting this meanness out, right out in the open. They're wearing it on their sleeves like an armband. They're sort of like the black widow spider with the hourglass on its abdomen, saying, "Look—you know, don't mess with me, because I'm really a pretty mean customer." Or the rattlesnake when it rattles.

Blanche (to Anton): You always talk about sleeping on the floor, too.

Anton: Yeah—I always felt that if you sleep on the floor, you never have to worry about falling out of bed. And when you get yourself in this exalted position of self-righteousness, then it's very easy to drop down a notch into what could be called degradation or disfavor. And so, the pretense has to be kept up even stronger than ever, lest you slip. And that's why there's a bigger smile, a more mellifluous voice, and a more godly or saintly approach in a public sense. And it's failure insurance, really.

What pisses you off more than anything else?

A lot of things do, and I don't deny it. I'm not trying to say, "Oh, these things just roll off like water on a duck's back," and all that sort of thing, like I don't pay any attention to these things. I think if you don't pay any attention to any of these things and they don't get to you, you don't get that concentration of energy or that controlled adrenal force or energy that can make magic happen, if you want to call it magic. It has to be for real. You have to really get worked up. It might not be too good for your system—stress is pretty bad for you—but, I mean, let's face it, it gets things done sometimes if it's controlled and contained, and this conservation of energy translates. Sometimes a bottling-up of rage and hate, bad feelings about things, anger, is often very powerful, very potent. Because you let a little of it loose, and it's like a lightning bolt.

And if you're going around waving your arms wildly and punching at the air like a punch-drunk fighter or raging all the time, that's not going to really accomplish anything, either. That's just as bad as taking the self-righteous approach. Like the frothing-at-the-mouth kind of guy with nothing to say but vitriol about everything and anything, that has no sense of aesthetics, that can't appreciate beauty, appreciate anything in life, that is just totally, "Whatever it is," like Groucho used to say, "I'm against it."...

Let's see—what pisses me off? I think the Nine Satanic Sins cover what pisses me off pretty well. Generally, I have my list that would be on a scale from one to ten. Of course, I don't like shit-disturbers. That would be right up near the top of the list. That would be people who do not have direction or who take the individuals, the institutions, the objects that *should* be venerated or should be given consideration, and again, as I said earlier, try to tear these worthwhile things down just simply because they're better than who the shit-disturber is. And they can't be allowed to live or flourish, even as simple as their wants may be. Because, however simple the wants of the superior person may be, it's still the stuff of which resentment is made from the person who wishes to destroy it....

What pisses me off? I don't like blaming leaders for everything. Leaders are really not anything more than sounding boards for the people that either vote them in or follow them. And when people say, "I was only following orders," or, "I really don't feel this way myself, but I was sort of led into this." People that blame leaders. I don't care whether the leader is someone like Stalin or someone like Hitler or someone like Manson or someone like a guy that happens to have a group of followers that will just simply—like, Tom Metzger is a perfect example—be blamed for what the knuckleheads or the dunderheads or the stupes do



to, perhaps, overextend what they have said. EACH LIVING CREATURE, whether it's human or otherwise, should be held responsible for ITS actions.

OK. I'm sure you've been blamed for what the knuckleheads have done.

Of course. And I probably will continue and never, never cease to be blamed.

What do you think about anarchists?

The new self-conscious "anarchists" are humans of little or no value who have turned ineptitude into a movement. They are writers who have nothing worth saying, musicians who have nothing worth playing. Yet they think themselves to be the "cutting edge," when invariably their blade is a butter knife. I've yet to see one with real talent or ability. They resent anyone with plan, purpose, or direction—especially aesthetic discipline and harmony. They're like the hippies who considered any of the aforementioned "hang-ups." If you happen to be on their team, when you shit, it's "performance art." If you're otherwise, you could spend a lifetime perfecting a skill and go unnoticed. Anarchists wear their badges of aimless disarray well, though, and silently proclaim, in that manner, how they really want themselves to be. If they want to wear rags, let them toil the fields. Put them in a slave-labor camp for the benefit of the elite.

Are animals really more noble than people?

I wouldn't squash a spider, but I could kill a human being. A spider is being the best spider he can be. He's fulfilling his purpose as a spider. He meshes perfectly with nature's overall scheme. Nothing in nature is wasted, and I can't say the same thing about people. ■

the honky ya love to hate

david duke, duke, duke, duke: the earl of racial politics



Jus' lookit that politician there, with the rosy cheeks and toothy smile. So tall he is, and a good Christian, too! He's bouncin' babies and shakin' hands, talkin' 'bout God and country. He's fed up with the corrupt fat cats—says they're sellin' out the USA to foreigners. He'll stamp out crime and boost education. He'll protect veterans, the handicapped, the elderly, and the environment. He wants lower taxes and equal rights for all.

Does it matter that he's the most hated man in America? At forty-one, David Ernest Duke doesn't have a few skeletons in his closet, he has a whole cemetery. He's been a student and proponent of white supremacy since his early teens. While his college peers were quoting Mao, he worshipped Uncle Adolf and sometimes strolled the campus in a Nazi uniform. He became a grand wizard of the KKK in his mid-twenties. To compile a mailing list of black radicals, he wrote a handbook for street-fighting militants under the pseudonym "Mohammed X." Calling himself "Dorothy Vanderbilt," he penned "Finders Keepers," a how-to-please-your-man guide for women which gave pointers on anal sex and described vaginal exercises. By 1980, he had quit the Klan and formed the National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP). He's the man primarily responsible for dressing the white-power movement in a business suit.

He "went legit" in 1989, squeaking into Louisiana's state legislature by two hundred and twenty-seven votes. He simultaneously softened the pricklier edges of his racist rhetoric. Last year he was nearly elected Louisiana's governor on his way to becoming one of America's most visible politicians—almost everyone knows who David Duke is, but few can name the guy who beat him.

In their mealy-mouthed indignation, his enemies are aghast that he's come this far. They can't understand why all the rednecks are so pissed. It's simple—name another politician who speaks openly for working-class whites. Can't, can you? The general perception, justified or not, is that Republicans care about rich whites while Democrats cater to poor blacks. David Duke belongs to the Republican Party (much to its chagrin), but his message is pure populism.

His main target, affirmative action, triggers deeply emotional responses among voters. The program's purpose was to redress inequities caused by slavery. Its fatal flaw is that it doesn't bleed plantation owners, it harms working whites through higher taxes and reduced services. White anger may be misplaced, but it's genuine.

There's an old liberal fiction which implies that all whites are oppressors. Yeah, blacks have had it harder in this country, but that doesn't mean that all Caucasians have had a cakewalk. You'd be kidding yourself to think that the tractor drivers, gas pumpers, and trailer dwellers who form Duke's core of support are the lords of the global village.

The lib-chic press only compounds the problem. It acts as the guardian of rain-forest Indians but has only contempt for low-income whites in its own neighborhood. It'll embrace Louis Farrakhan's rhetoric about black economic empowerment but politely ignores his insane myths about whites having been created by an evil scientist. In the liberals' book, you can act like an asshole as long as you're perceived as a victim. And the possibility that genetic differences exist between the races—*whoever* comes out on top—is all but forbidden as a topic of debate.

Lest you think that *ANSWER Me!*'s editors are storm troopers for *der Führer*, I find it necessary to state that we're not racists. We hate *everybody* equally. Our only problem with Hitler is that he was too specific. If he'd called for an across-the-board holocaust, we'd be waving swastika pennants. Debbie's Jewish, but she doesn't like to talk about *that*. We'll never have kids, refuse to align ourselves with communal

movements, and don't get along with anyone anyway, so we don't feel like we own a ticket in the racial sweepstakes.

I spoke with David Duke in a phone call placed to his headquarters just outside of New Orleans. In a sugary drawl, he responded to many questions as if reciting from a campaign speech. At times I felt as if I'd plugged into an automated phone system: *"For my opinion on forced busing, press nine now...."* Duke is a telegenic media cyborg, mannequinlike in his tailored palatability. And, yes, he's a shameless manipulator of public unrest, but what politician isn't?

Human beings, like water buffalo, tend to stay with their own kind and attack those who look different. Visit any jail and this becomes uncomfortably obvious. Yet some still cling to the silly notion that hatred can be cured as if it were muscular dystrophy. The world as we knew it is shattering into an ugly pile of jagged tribal shards. If you think you know how to stop this, your ego is bigger than your brain.

A lot of people seem terrified of you. Why do you think that is?

Well, I think it's been 'cause of a lot of the sensational media painting of me. You know, I was certainly in the Klan years ago, but I never committed any violent acts whatsoever, and I've always condemned that kind of behavior. I was certainly too intolerant, but I've grown beyond that, and I think that there's a double standard of the media when it comes to David Duke. Clarence Thomas was once associated with the Black Panthers—that's at least according to *Time* magazine. He wore a Black Panther beret, he helped take over university campuses, and even his worst liberal critics never said he shouldn't serve on the Supreme Court because of his black racist positions at one time, so, you know? Ronald Reagan was a socialist up until his forties. And I mean an open socialist—advocacy of socialism. He was one of the founding members of the United World Federalists and one of the World Socialists Organization. He was a charter member of Americans for Democratic Action, which was openly socialist. So, I mean, I think there's a double standard, and I can understand why people—*some* people—might be afraid of me by getting one side of the story.

I definitely agree with you that there's hypocrisy in the media—it seems the only acceptable racial slur is "white trash."

Well, that's right, or "honky," or whatever. I mean, there's a political correctness that goes beyond simply some speech on campuses. There's a political correctness that pervades most of our national media in America.

Describe the typical David Duke supporter.

Well, at least we did very well in the elections here in Louisiana. We had a good cross section. I represent a district that's the highest educated and the highest income district in the state, highest Republican percentage in the state, and I won a majority of the Republican votes. I also won a great section, or a great sector, of Democratic working people. My district is mostly Catholic—I think I have a good cross section of all the different groups that make up the country. I didn't have a tremendous amount of black support. I only got about four percent of the black vote, which is consistent with what Bush got when he ran here, consistent to what David Treen received, the former governor, but no Republican candidate gets much of the black bloc vote. But we have a very sizeable percentage of black bloc vote here in Louisiana, bigger than any other state except for one [Mississippi]. That's why I lost the general election.

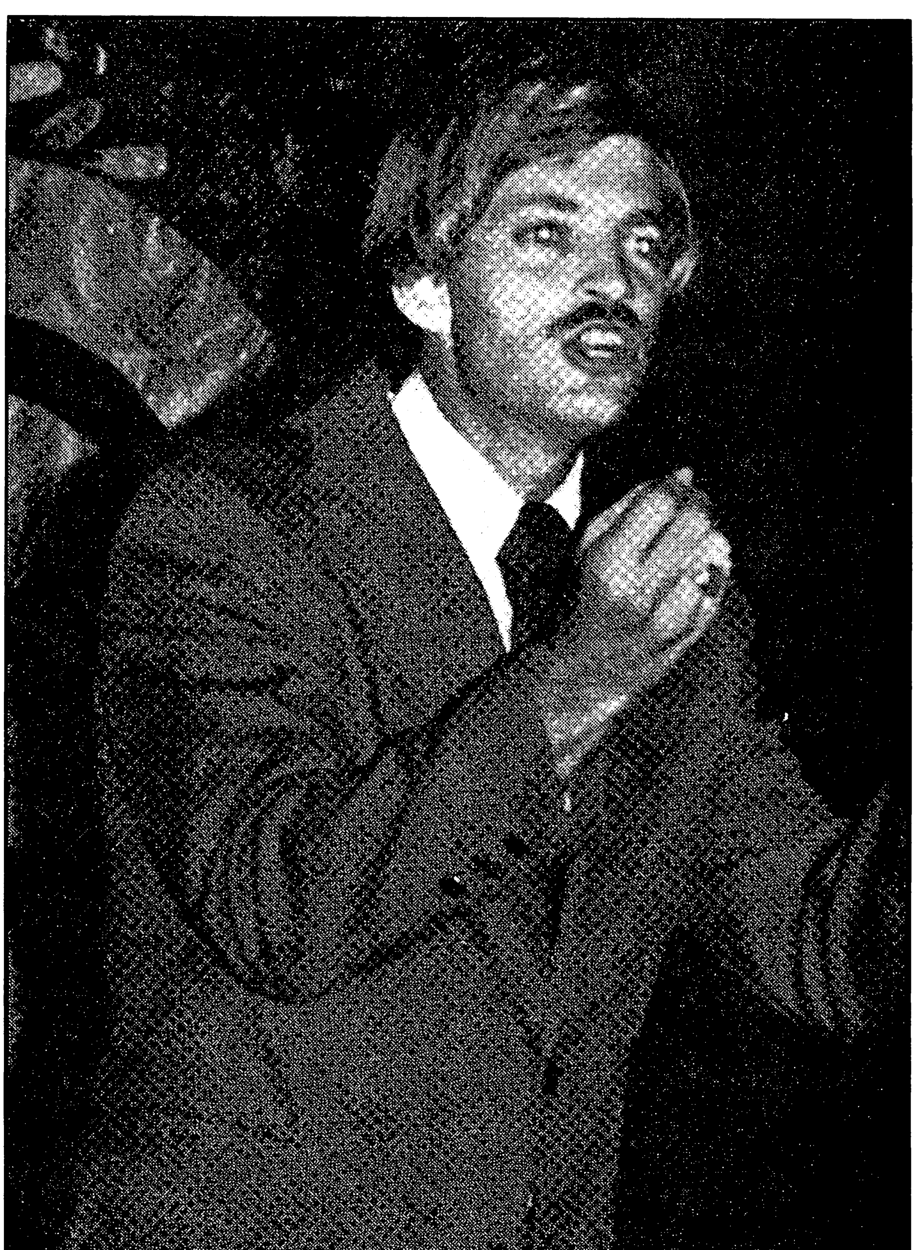


PHOTO BY MITCHELL OSBORNE

Dave as a fired-up young white guy.

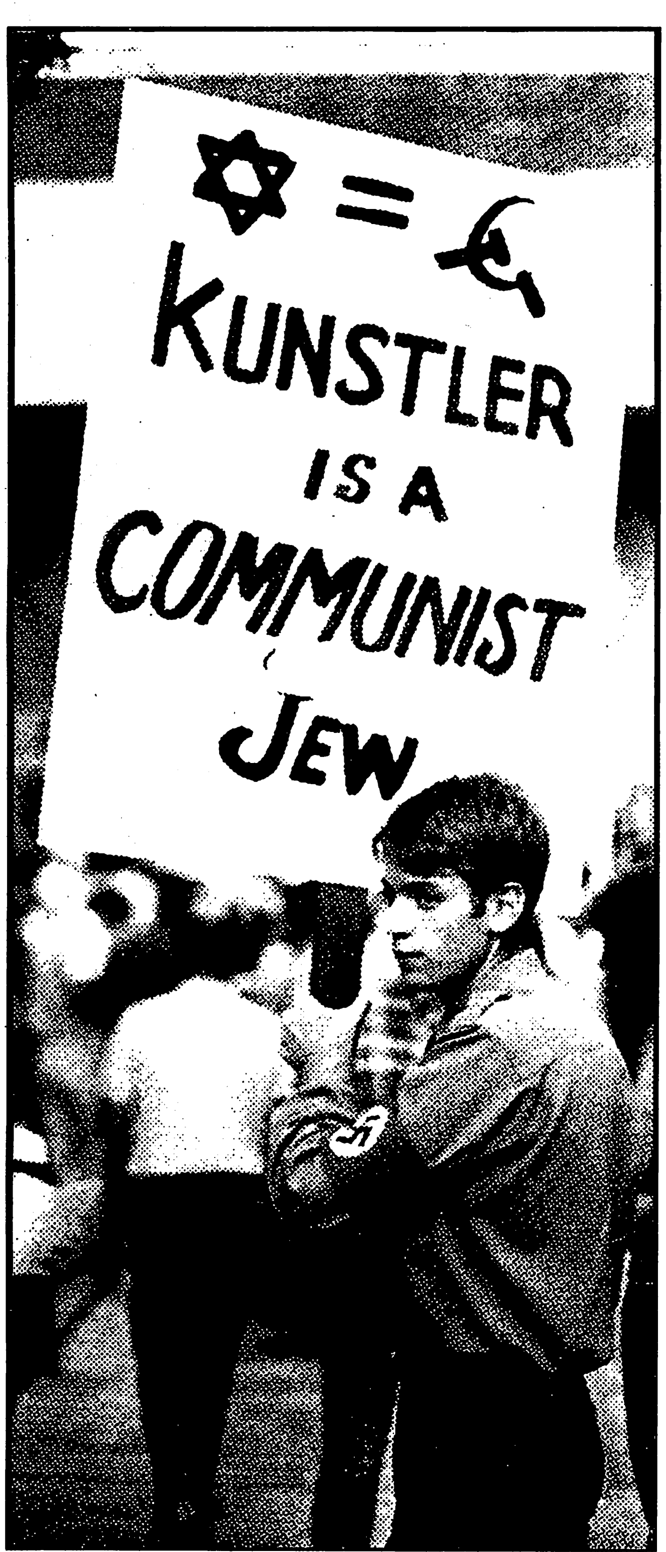
The black vote?

Well, it's the primary issue, yes. I won about fifty-six percent of the white vote statewide.

You've often spoken about "Western civilization," "Christian values," and "our heritage." Exactly what are you talking about, and why should these things be preserved?

I'm talking about precisely that. I mean, certainly, if you said, "What is Western civilization?" I guess it's the body of culture that European civilization's produced. And it could be represented by many. You could talk about William Shakespeare, or you could talk about

Hegel, or you could talk Goethe or Locke, Burke, and Hume. There's just so many things you could speak about. You could speak about the music of Mozart, or you could talk about Renaissance architecture or Gothic architecture. I mean, there's so many things, but Western Christian civilization *is* an entity. It is a reality, and it's a culture and civilization as much as the classical civilizations were of Greece and Rome, even though we borrowed much from them. Or the Egyptian civilization, or the Mesopotamian, or the civilization of ancient India—we have a thread of culture that goes before us. We're overwhelmingly a Christian country, and I think that the fact that we've gotten away from some of those Christian principles and values is one of the reasons why we've suffered as a nation.



The biggest mistake Dave ever made.

You've referred to your well-publicized past as "youthful indiscretion"—

—Well, let me just say something to you. Let me correct something—

Let me just—

—It's been reprinted a thousand times. I never said that. I've never called my past youthful indiscretions. The *media* called it youthful indiscretions, and that's repeated a thousand times.

OK, fair enough, I'll accept that—

—I call my past, you know, mistakes, not indiscretions. And my opinions, I've changed a lot of my opinions in my life.

OK, I guess the core of the question was, if indeed you've had a change of heart, when was it and what caused it? And also, is it truly possible to escape your past?

I don't think it's possible for anyone to escape the past. We're all made up of what we do in the past. But we have a possibility for change in our lives. And I did not have a road-to-Damascus experience, I had a gradual transition, and I think as people get older, they become a lot more moderate and a lot more tolerant and forgiving. I tended to blame minorities for a lot of the conditions in that community, and now I tend more to blame the liberal social-welfare system which has *created* a lot of those conditions, which has encouraged dependency rather than independence, which has encouraged illegitimacy. It's allowed drug dealers and drug users to control neighborhoods where children grow up in that environment, and, you know, I think that we've got to change those fundamentals in America. You know, I have a lot of the same beliefs that I had as a young man. I still believe in the Constitution. I still am opposed to forced busing—I think that's been damaging to education. I still am for less government and less taxes, but I'm certainly a lot more moderate, and I'm certainly, you know, much more tolerant of minorities, and I think that's something that normally takes place in people's lives when they get a little older and a little wiser.

You were quoted in the seventies as saying, "America is headed toward... more radical times." What did you mean?

I still tend to believe that America is headed for great trials, and I think that the liberal social-welfare programs have produced this disastrous situation in our cities, in our educational system. It's produced crime, drugs, violence, and it seems to me the government is still pursuing this. The government continues to grow. In fact, it's continuing to escalate. You know, we've had a few blips on the screen, but basically we're moving in the same direction we have for the last thirty years, and I think if those conditions continue, that we'll be in a much more volatile situation. I think crime will continue to grow, I think education problems will continue to mount, I think that the drug problem will not be significantly alleviated, and in those times I think people will be looking for, you know, very courageous and strong leaders.

What's the most unfair thing ever said about David Duke?

There's no way I could begin to *categorize* all the unfair things. It's just, the unfairness is their inconsistency. I mean, they accuse me of one thing one day and one thing the next. One day I'm a homosexual, next day I'm a womanizer. One day I'm a radical fanatic, next day I'm in it for money. It just goes on and on. It's a fact in this country when you can't argue with a man's ideas and when he has principles people believe in and you can't effectively fight his ideas, then you have to attack his character, and I

think that's what's happened to me.

But I think that in the zeal to attack my character, they've made me a household word, and they've actually propelled my ideas. Because people see that David Duke, who, you know, has a former Klan membership, and that's certainly [laughs], I guess, not the best accolade you could have in American politics, and they still *vote* for me in overwhelming numbers, that says to every other politician who does have a more sanitized background, it says, "Well, if David Duke can win on the strength of these issues with his background, I, too, can *talk* about them." And the one, I guess, great achievement that I've had over the last four years since I was elected to office has been that there's been a whole new public debate that has grown up and has been allowed because of that. There's a debate now on the social-welfare system that we have in this country. There's now a national debate on affirmative action after I used those issues for the first time effectively and successfully in a campaign. I saw the Democratic national presidential debate on NBC the other day, and they mentioned my name four times during the course of the debate in connection with my issues. I think that my issues are now becoming debated and discussed, and I think that can only help move people *toward* them.

Which of your ideas would you consider unassailable? You said they can't really attack your ideas.

I think they have a very difficult time attacking the fact that I believe in equal rights for all and that human rights must be for everybody in this country and that if discrimination against blacks or other minorities is immoral, then certainly, on a moral level, it's just as immoral to discriminate against a *white*. And human rights have to be for everyone. And there are poor blacks and there are poor whites, and there are blacks from broken families and whites from broken families. So I think that really, I think that affirmative action, when it's really discussed thoroughly, is an indefensible position. It's a very racist position that is very indefensible, because if people say that you want to help people who've got a tough environment, *fine*. Make environmental advantages, or environmental-assisting programs. But when you say white or black, what you end up doing is you discriminate, often in favor of the good environment over the bad. For instance, there are middle-class blacks. Why should a middle-class black be given more favorable treatment, say, over a white person who comes from a broken family and abject poverty, especially if the white child does better? So if you have a program based on your background and [the] environmental impact in your life, that's one thing. So affirmative action has no real moral underpinning at all. It's a very racist program and it hasn't worked.

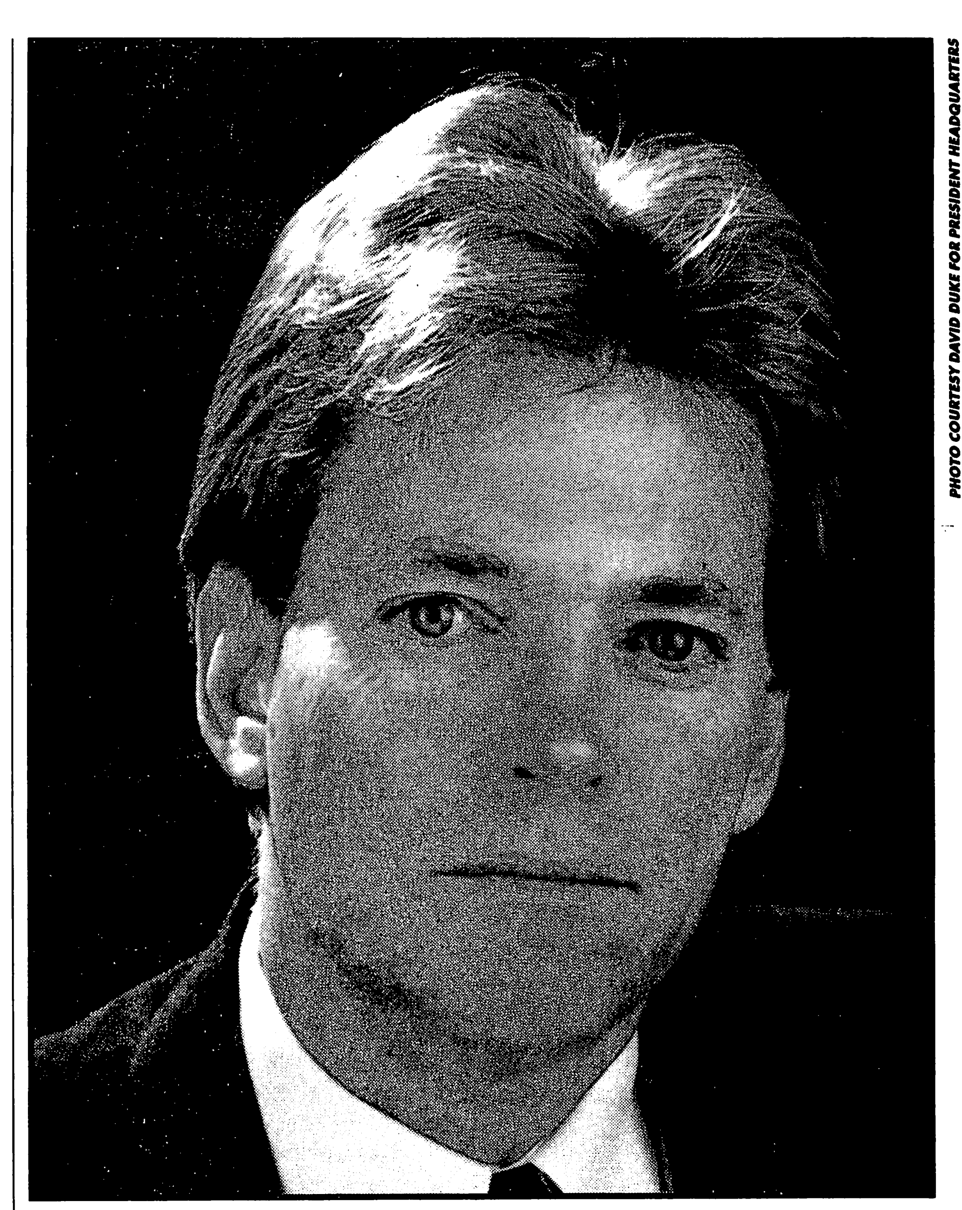


PHOTO COURTESY DAVID DUKE FOR PRESIDENT HEADQUARTERS

Dave 1992: kinder, gentler, and sincere as shit.

What would you say is the biggest mistake you've ever made?

The biggest mistake I ever made was putting on a swastika and picketing William Kunstler when I was nineteen years old for fifteen minutes. Kunstler was advocating victory for the Viet Cong in Vietnam and [was] a very open communist, and I was trying to figure out some way to call attention to him and what he was doing at Tulane, and I did that by myself for fifteen minutes, and that's caused me a lot of grief, and that was certainly a mistake. I shouldn't have done it—protested Kunstler in that way.

Have you always been a troublemaker?

No, I really haven't. I was a very good child. I read an awful lot. I always have been, you know, pretty honest about what I've believed. I've always spoken up. I mean, if I believed in something, I would say it. I mean, I learned in Sunday school that if the crowd went the wrong way, then you had to stand up and say and do the right thing. And sometimes that causes some trouble when you see an injustice and you speak out about it. Or when you feel something passionately and you open your mouth and not just be quiet about it. So I don't mean to make trouble, but sometimes it *happens*. Sometimes there's certainly controversy when people debate key issues.

Is it true that blonds have more fun?

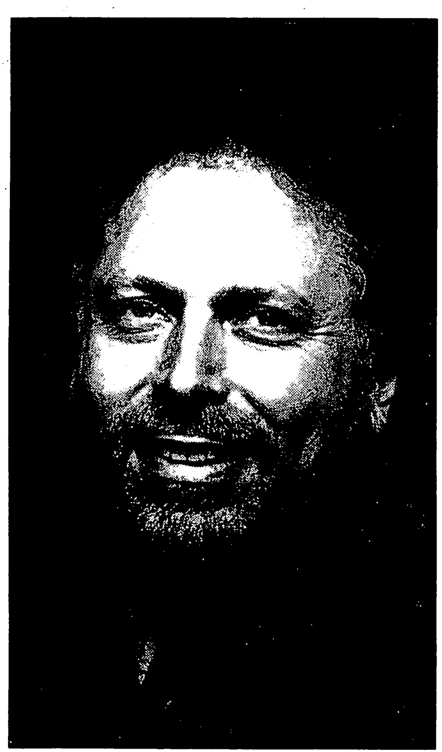
I wouldn't know. I've got light-brown hair, so I'm not a real blond. But I have one daughter that's blonde and one that's a brunette, and I couldn't say that the blonde has any more fun. ■

10-minute SCREW

al goldstein is the sultan of smut. the baron of beaver. the lord of labia. *der kommissar* of kink.

Bow down, America, and give Al Goldstein a blow job. I can't think of anyone who deserves it more. As Editor and Publisher of *SCREW*, he invented postmodern porn in 1968, six years before *Hustler* first showed the Pink Oyster. Al's overseen more than twelve hundred weekly issues since then, jousting with censors and tweaking this uptight nation's heinie-hole. With gonadal chutzpah, he also hosts the public-access cable show *Midnight Blue*. "The life of Al Goldstein," he once wrote in his Op-Ed column *SCREW YOU*, "is a dream walk on a vast beach of pleasure."

SCREW's content is so corrosive to established tastes that newsstands sell it with its pages stapled shut. It both documents and derides the Big Apple's seamy sex industry, serving as a guide with which to sift through the lotions, dildos, and spiked objects which make our lives happier. It offers punishingly honest reviews of peep shows, swing clubs, S&M bars, and every other manner of gooey entertainment palace. Its format, black-and-white newsprint, adds to the filthy aroma, with tight shots of woolly groins and snow-white jism splattered on black bushes. Phone-sex come-ons and escort-service ads dominate the mag's latter half, with deviations catering to every possible proclivity. Photos of unfinished transsexuals are a particular sight to behold, portraying firm, round breasts, chiffon teddies, and ten-inch tools dangling leadenly between hairy legs. It's what the authorities like to call "smut."



Al Goldstein: "I am the classic john, and SCREW is a representative, or a reflection, of my personality. . . ."

But *SCREW* veers from the porn mainstream in that it features actual *writing*, with real words and everything! It's arrogant enough to bill itself as "The World's Greatest Newspaper," and *ANSWER Me!* agrees. It contains the brashest self-referential humor in publishing, porn or otherwise. *SCREW* portrays New York as a metropolis of sallow closet jerkoffs, taking every opportunity to berate the reader for being a "milquetoast armchair masturbator." Goldstein uses full-page layouts to commit character assassinations of his enemies. Ironic photo captions recall *CREEM* in its heyday, but where *CREEM* would insult some doofus rock star, *SCREW* pokes fun at a sagging clit or a stretched anus.

We were granted a mere ten minutes to interrupt Al's hedonistic escapades—barely enough time to bust a nut. But with a caustic New York accent spoken through his nostrils, Al gave us enough pithy material to form an article. He also confirmed our suspicions that he's highly intelligent by telling us that we asked better questions than the usual nincompoops.

What's wrong with feminism?

Oh, well, there are different *types* of feminism. The feminism that has gotten the media's attention is truly fascistic tyranny—you've gotta be politically correct. In many cases it's male-hating, it's blaming, it's childish and adolescent, and mostly it's pro-censorship. But I'm talkin' about the loud media feminists. I am a feminist, because I hire people based on their abilities. When I get married or have a relationship with somebody, usually I'm attracted to intelligent women who are responsible for their actions. So I consider myself the ultimate feminist and Gloria Steinem the ultimate fascist slut.

Beautiful. What's wrong with liberals?

Oh, repeat. They're the same thing. Politically correct. The ones I hate the most are the knee-jerk Jewish liberals who are in favor of anything sexual as long as it was written a hundred years ago. They're good little boys who wanted to make their mommies happy. Their mommies have generally emasculated and terrorized their fathers, and sadly, they're mostly Jewish. And it takes one to know one. They're pathetic, uh, they're *pathetic*. And mostly, they really don't believe in freedom. They're not really comfortable with sex. They are very disturbed individuals, and that's why I prefer the right wing. I'd rather have Morton Downey and Pat Buchanan than sixty Jewish cocktail liberals. And I keep using the word 'Jewish,' 'cause, as a Jew, I am so upset the Jews are not better than the ACLU-type legal mentality.

What's happening to free speech in this country?

Nothing new. I mean, again, people are always looking for some new trend. Nothing new. It's always the battle of the people who are not afraid of freedom, or are willing to be afraid of freedom but still not stifle it, and those who want to control and limit and curtail. So this battle is forever. It never stops. It's no different this year than ten years ago, than a hundred years ago, than the Inquisition, than it will be in a hundred years in the future. So it's not a new trend. It's always the humanists against the yahoos.

You're described in a recent issue as "the publisher of the first split beaver shot ever to be printed on these hallowed shores." Tell the tired old story of what got you into the porn business.

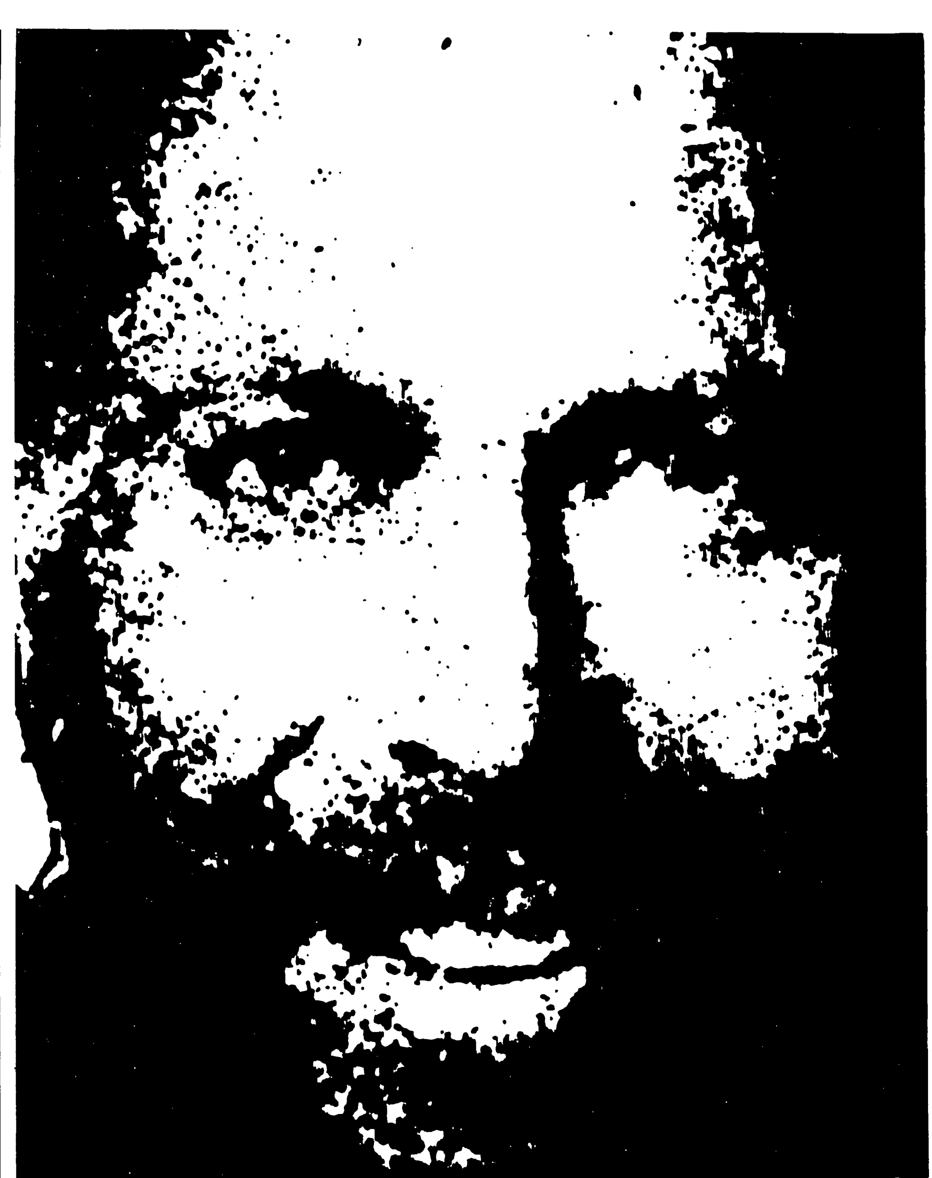
Basically, for me, I was a *consumer* of pornography. When I was sixteen, I was exposed to Henry Miller and Frank Harris, and I always

found it sort of an incongruity that someone like a writer such as Henry Miller—*Tropic of Capricorn, Tropic of Cancer*—in the back of these traveler's-companion books, there was a little line saying, "MUST NOT BE IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES OR ENGLAND." Seemed so strange that here were books without pictures, but ideas that were so frightening to the Establishment that they were not permitted. So I actually grew up reading about sex, but reading about it in a secretive way. Because I grew up in the Joe McCarthy era. I joined the American Civil Liberties Union when I was fifteen. I'm now, actually I'm fifty-six *today*, so I've been a member of the [American] Civil Liberties Union for forty-one years. So I'm not some Johnny-come-lately hiding behind the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. I've always not hidden, but am proud of the Bill of Rights. Anyway, point being that I was sexually, I guess, liberated and knowledgeable and knew about the battles against censorship.

And as a consumer of pornography, I was amazed how hard it was to obtain and how hypocritical we were, whether it was a *Playboy*—they would use words like 'cunnilingus' and 'fellatio.' The *Reader's Digest* only pushed marriage. Oral sex was only a foreplay. Masturbation was a sin. Again, I paid for sex all the time and have never stopped. In all my marriages, I paid for sex. No one gives me money, or no one has ever bought me dinner. So I am the classic john, and *SCREW* is a representative, or a reflection, of my personality and the reality of sex—that guys don't say, "Uh, God, she reads Spinoza." They say, "Boy, she sucked my cock, and it was wonderful. I ate her pussy. I brought her off four times." So *SCREW* is an extension of the dishonesty I saw in 1968. It was like the emperor was naked and no one admitted it. *SCREW* not only admitted it, but glorified it.

Great. What would the country be like under President Al Goldstein?

Probably healthier. I would not be wasting my time on crimes of morality or immorality—you could substitute the words 'morality' and 'immorality' for 'religion,' or a kind of religion. I would really try to put the bad guys away. Every time I see a *60 Minutes* or *PrimeTime [Live]* or *20/20*, I see about the greedy people who exploit us—I would really try to protect the interests of *most* people and not have the gibberish of, say, the war on drugs, which is a joke. We should legalize drugs the same way we legalize alcohol and smoking, and then let those people have to deal with the consequences of their actions. But you can't prohibit it—it doesn't work, it didn't work in the twenties, it doesn't work today.



PHOTOS COURTESY AL GOLDSTEIN

Uh, *I would not have all the answers.* But at least I would be entertaining, and unlike George Bush, who pathetically collapsed [after vomiting in Japan], I would probably faint at a deli 'cause I tried to eat ten pounds of pastrami. I would be honest and entertaining, and I would leave prostitutes alone, gays [alone]. I'm in favor of free choice, I'm in favor of abortion. In other words, it would be something that's never happened in America—an honest, sane government. But that's why it *will* never happen, because Americans like to give lip service to lies, self-deceit.

That's a good one. In your eyes, how does *SCREW* stand apart from the other porn publications?

It's the most honest. It's the difference between a fire and a firefly. The other ones are like, I don't know—are we the fire or the firefly? I like to think of us as the fire in terms of the honesty of genitalia, of passion, of caring. Whatever few lies I am probably guilty of in the last twenty-three years, it's less than any other publisher. And *SCREW* is not pornographic, but it's about where to *get* pornography. And I think we do it with literacy, and humor, and hopefully a perspective of not taking ourselves that seriously. We take the fight for *freedom* seriously, but not ourselves seriously.

Last question—generally, does it take you longer to cum or to do an interview like this? About eight minutes so far.

Equally quick. No, generally, I cum in about twenty seconds. Hopefully, when I'm in California, you will feel obligated to me and throw up to me sort of, as one gives to the gods, some damsel, your girlfriend, who will just turn her back on you, who you'd throw up to me as tribute. I would say that's the least you could do.

You're a genius.

Thank you. ■



RAPE ROCKER

EL DUCE STICKS IT TO THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

When the door opens to El Duce's Hollywood apartment, you are immediately gripped by the rampant clutter, the yellowing walls, the thick animal **SMELL.** Rats screech in a cage near the bathroom. His common-law wife Missy lets us into their tiny Vine Street flat, explaining that El went out to get more booze. As she sits on a floor-level mattress and tends to a constantly ringing phone, we thumb through El's collection of obscure porn magazines.

El Duce is, after all, the godfather of porn rock. As lead singer and drummer for the Mentors, his bearded mouth has been regurgitating lyrical filth since 1977. His dulcet tones have breathed life into such classics as "My Erection is Over," "On the Rag," "Clap Queen," "Herpes Two," and "Heterosexuals Have the Right to Rock."

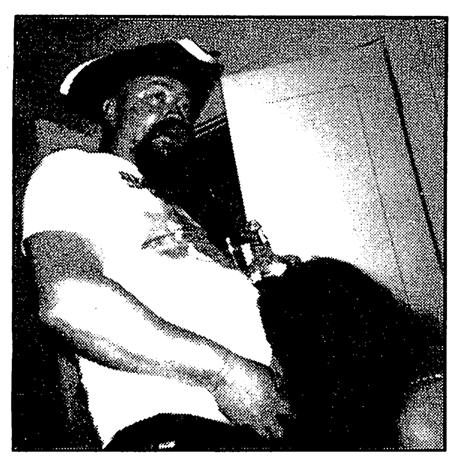
The Mentors are the creeping scum at the bottom of the musical barrel. In 1985, when tight-assed senator's wife Tipper Gore went before Congress to show how low rock 'n' roll had sunk, she cited a lyric from the Mentors' "Golden Showers":

Bend up and smell my anal vapor/
Your face is my toilet paper.

ANSWER Me!'s editors rarely crawl out from under our rock. Nowadays, I'd rather do laundry than go to a club. I'm soooooo tired of the played-out music scene, but if any band can rouse me from the couch, it's the Mentors. Not only do they play a hilariously dissonant brand of sludge metal, they wear black hoods. I'm a sucker for visuals.

And when El Duce finally barges into his apartment with guitarist Sickie Wifebeater and a bag full of malt-liquor bottles, what a vision it is! "I was out there trying to panhandle money to get a beer 'cause I couldn't wait for you guys any longer!" he roars. El might be mistaken for a Hell's Angel if it weren't for his tricornered pirate's hat. Sickie wears a nasty shiner and a freshly shaven head, both of them gifts from El. I ask Sickie what happened. "I'm not a faggot!" he wails, his mind swimming in enough alcohol to fill an aquarium.

El expounds on what makes the Mentors unique: "We're drunks." Then, as if choreographed, both El and Sickie (bassist Dr. Heathen Scum was absent) blow snot out of their noses. Luckily for me, El's green slime dribbles onto his beard and stays there. Not so luckily, Sickie's hundred-proof phlegm lands on my



Missy gives El a common-law blow job.

pocketbook and hand. Wobbling around and poking at the air, he breaks an *ANSWER Me!* camera as we attempt to film the festivities. "Simmer down, Sickie," El orders. After ranting for a few more minutes, Sickie passes out on a pile of old newspapers.

El Duce, who is said to improvise his song lyrics, responds to my challenge to say the most offensive thing possible: "Suck the shit from my ass. Gargle my balls. Polish my German helmet on the end of my *loooove* stick while you're smelling my armpits."

His voice exceeds the heavens. It's hoarse, guttural, the sound of churning bowels. He claims his vocal cords were given to him by "the devil." He paces through his one-room apartment with a bottle of Jack Daniels in his left hand and a bottle of low-grade malt swill in his right. El says he's an Aries, "like Adolf Hitler." With a shiny bald head and bulging eyes, he stares straight at me. Scary? No, funny!

But he's not the darling of women's groups. "That's my forte," he bellows. "First of all, I got the thumbscrews and the 'C' clamps for their tits. The first thing I'll do for the uptight feminists is unzip my zipper and give them a golden-shower welcome. And then I'm going to remind them that their ass is made for my prick. And it's up to me to decide how they should be punished or impregnated or tormented and tortured. There's nothing like tormenting and torturing women. I get off on other people's misfortunes."

El Duce is from Seattle, home of the Space Needle, the Northwest's premier phallic symbol. He was born Eldon Ray Hoke forty-eight years ago, but he's not the trailer trash you might expect. He says that his father is a rocket scientist who helped design the Apollo 11. But as *ANSWER Me!* well knows, the family life is not always a pleasant one. "No matter how many spankings that board swings to my ass," El says with a wink, "I still haven't learned."

So instead of proudly carrying the family name, little Eldon became El Duce, a variant of Mussolini's *Il Duce*. "He thinks of himself as a dictator," Missy says.

El concurs. "When I become king of the country, I'm going to blow up that Statue of Liberty, build a Berlin Wall across the Mexican-American borderline and enslave everybody and send them to work camps if they don't have their green card. Then I'm gonna go to the welfare office and recruit people to go to the work camps."

But a dictator's life isn't all champagne and caviar. El describes a typical day as getting up, going down to welfare, hitting the liquor store, and hanging out with fellow drunks in Hollywood's notorious Bones Alley. He says that he survives by "trading food stamps, panhandling at the 7-11, and telling jokes for a quarter." His ideal job, though, would be auditioning girls for *Hustler*. He says society's main problem is "there's not enough young girls coming to Hollywood looking for acting jobs."

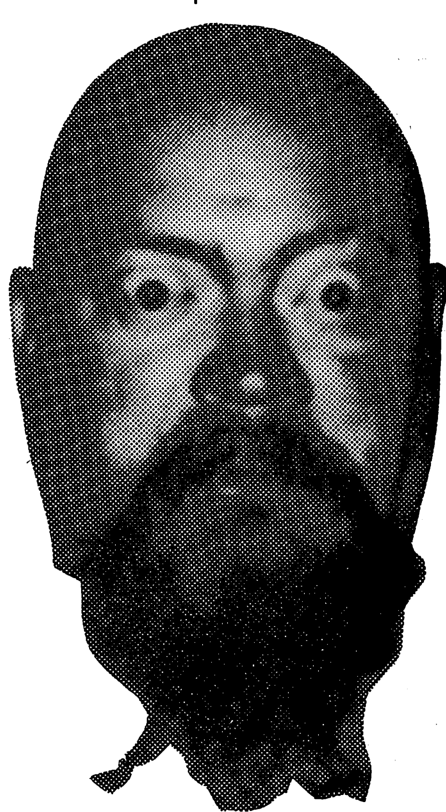
If the porn world won't take him, he hopes the underworld will. "I will work for the Mafia," he offers. "Anything the Mafia says to me and orders me to do, I'll do it. 'Cause I don't respect the government, I respect the Mafia....And if the Mafia gives me a break, put me in the back seat of that car. I want to drive around with a machine gun. Any asshole that starts any shit gets blown away....Some jackass is fucking up your life, you got to blow him away. I'm more into slamming the car door on fingers, 'cause that way, you get attention."

Standing on the mattress while his wife crouches on her knees, El whips out his peach-colored member. As the sweethearts ready themselves to pose for a blow-job shot, Missy recalls the time El pissed in her mouth. "It tasted like water," she reminisces. And I heard it tastes like chicken!

As his wife performs an act of love on his unit, El outlines his formula for a happy marriage: "You tie the bitch up, and then you start rocking. What you do is you fuck the woman. That shuts her mouth." He says he feels happiest "when I give a golden shower to a chick and then buttfuck her and then take a diarrhea right on top of her head when she's sleeping." Ann Landers, are you listening?

El Duce has blessed the world with a solo album, *The Man, the Myth, the Legend.* The Mentors' latest LP, *To the Max*, is their eighth. All of their albums deliver the musty, Vaseline-smeared, chancre-ridden goods. "I predict that the Mentors might rise out of the turmoil," El says, his eyes nearly popping out of his head. "The glam rockers and all the other poseur rockers cause problems. They cause problems in rock 'n' roll, and I'm here to solve them. I'm here to solve the problems of rock 'n' roll. I've seen the shit. I've pissed the shit. I take the shit, and I'm tired of it. Too many clowns are in charge. It's time for some heads to roll."

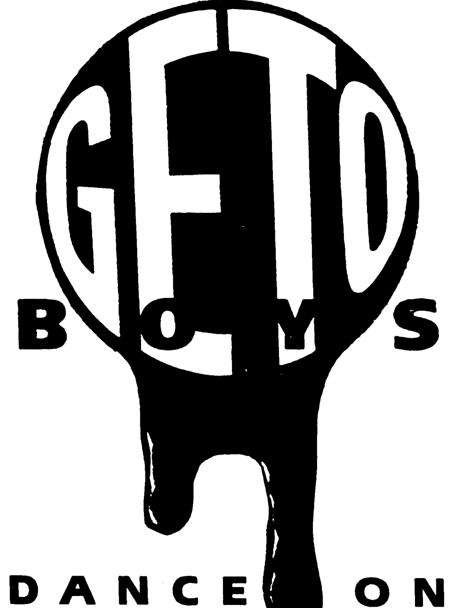
Sickie's wife, a Hollywood stripper, arrives. She tries to wake her spouse, but it's no use. He's kaput for now.



Despite all the alcohol, El's still hosting. Standing, he proclaims, "I won't stop the sickness. I'll stop the booze, but not the sickness. 'Cause [the booze is] bad for my health right now. I'm killing myself, but I don't give a fuck. I want to take fuckers to the grave with me." Take them, El. The sooner, the better. ■

Postscript: We regret to report that El Duce and Missy, the Romeo and Juliet of scum rock, have parted ways. The Mentors' publicist says that El's living in Azusa and "has other women on his mind."

FUNKY NECROS



DANCE ON YOUR GRAVE

PHOTOS COURTESY RAP-A-LOT RECORDS

HOUSTON, TEXAS: Deepest, darkest South. Dry oil wells. Musty swampland. Arrogant steel-and-glass skyline. Down on the streets, postindustrial chaos. Bad blood. USA's violent legacy ready to explode in its face. Here in the Lone Star State, a cowboy's worst nightmare.

ITEM #1 — RICHARD SHAW (BUSHWICK BILL):

"Down here, you got it all. You got the skinheads, you got the KKK, you got the slam-dancers, you got the blacks who think they in L.A. with that red-and-blue thing, you got it all here. You got the acidheads, you got the angel dust, you got the heroin users, the cracks, the regular sniffin' and all that, you got it all."

Four feet, six inches tall. Punctuates words with fractured elfin giggle. Unclear whether Bushwick thinks he's a victim of society, family, or self. No matter. No social agenda, no self-justification. Shows little interest in black history and the attendant dashikis or "consciousness beads." Dismissed by other rappers as negative influence on community. Could be first dwarf with Top Thirty record. Lyrical topics: copulating murder victims, killing little girls, sexual prowess. Threatens to shoot law-enforcement officers. Dangerous, rabble-rousing displays of bravado. Pop music's nadir.

"In order to be a man, you gotta have balls. I wouldn't want to meet nobody who ain't got balls.... Even if you're prejudiced with intelligence, I could, you know, stomach it, heh, heh! I like to take people's heads off verbally, you know what I'm sayin'? 'Cause you can leave a mark on a person's life by just pickin' up a mirror in front of them, verbally, and let them see a reflection of themselves. Leave them with something to think about. See, the worst thing you could do to a fool is let him live. Killin' him would make him happy. The worst thing you could do is let him live. Ignore him. Downplay him. Show him, them, or the situation for what it is. I just let 'em know that the only thing that could give orders is balls. And if you play pussy, get fucked. If you feel like a frog, leap into a bad decision. Nothin' needs to be said, somethin' needs to be done. If it's goin' down, let's get it over with. Ha, ha! Straight up. End of conversation. I tell 'em all just like that. Bing! It's up to them to either leave it alone or step calm, 'cause I'm from the ghetto, a modern-day Vietnam."

PCP dislocation. Rotted fruit rinds. Empty malt-liquor bottles. Piss and cheap marijuana. Ashen residue on crack pipes. Self-inflicted brain lesions. Fingers smeared with cocaine, spillage from uncut kilos. Street-corner entrepreneurs.

"You ever seen somebody, like, OD, man? That's wild, man. 'Cause they just start actin' ill, and they start chokin' and gaggin', and they can't do nothin' for themselves. It must have been heroin. Throwin' up all over the place and just, eyes roll back in the head, drop, ding! Flippin' all over the place. You always gonna see somebody get shot and see blood, but to see somebody who's not bleeding goin' through the same thing as if their body's just been torn to pieces. . . ."

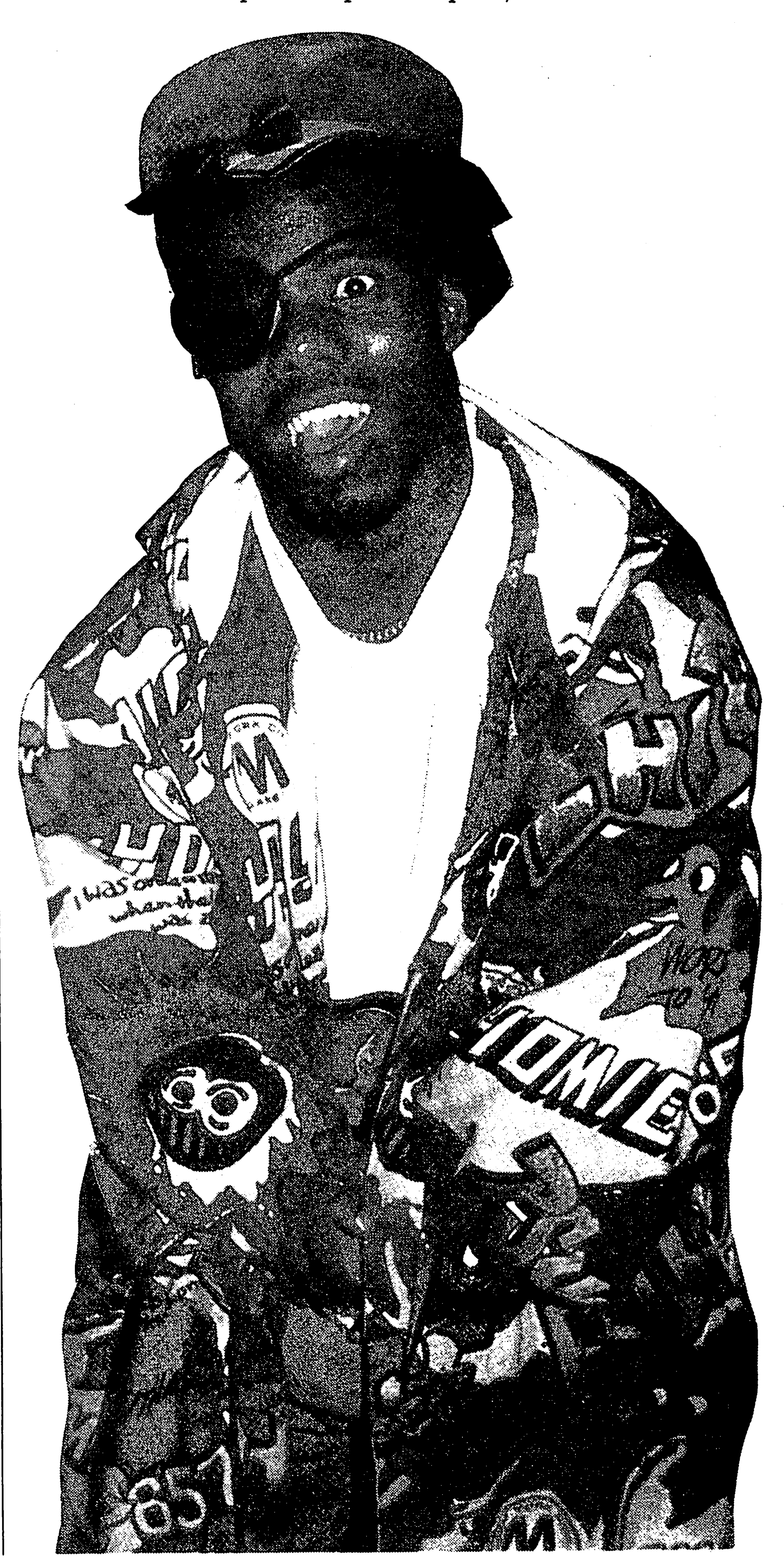
Morbid, lingering torture. Skillful dismemberment. Slasher-movie fixations. Adrenaline buzz of mirthful predation. Undertakers. Graveyards. Stench of unearthed coffins. A clod of dirt being shoveled on your face.

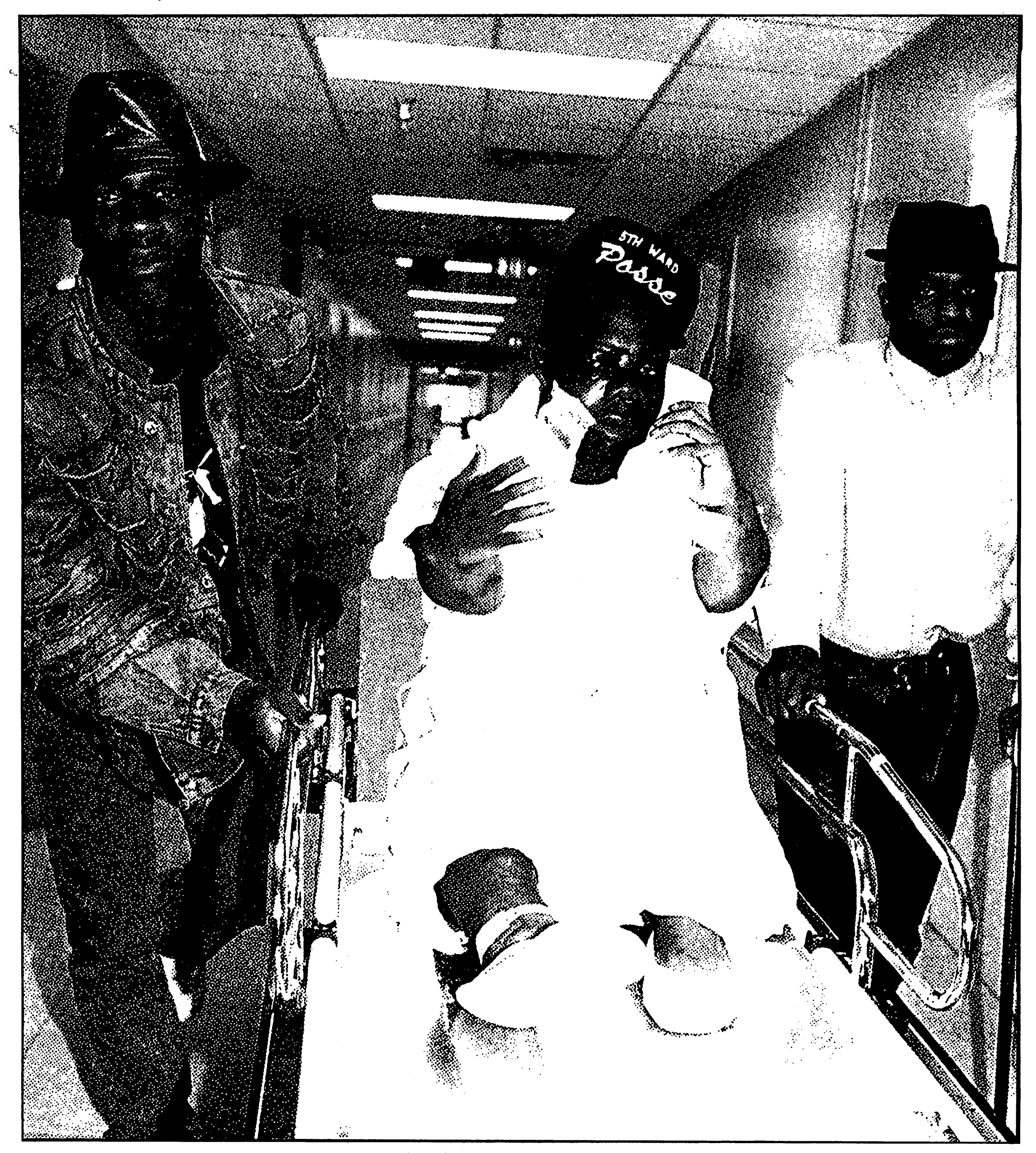
"People could just look at certain people and know who to fuck with or who not to fuck with. And you know if they fuck with you, they gotta approach you in a certain way. I mean, it's just basic body language, man. Common sense. You could look at someone and tell when they gonna start trouble with you."

Paranoia of dimly lit ghetto quadrants. Distorted sirens howling. Carcinogenic tenement hallways. Dried blood on baseball bats. Twisted revenge fantasies recited over cellular phones. Hot lead pelting your forehead. Unforgiving white light of mug-shot flashbulbs. Forced anal penetration. Fecal smears on cellblock rapist's penis. Irreversible trauma. Eternal pandemonium.

"Our albums is basically what I call current events. . . . In none of our songs do you ever hear us say, 'Kill somebody. Take drugs. Be this way, be that way.' We're always talkin' about, 'Why do we have to live this way? Why are things like this?' And since I can't change it, you know what I'm sayin', I gotta protect myself *from* it. When you're in Rome, what do you do? . . . We talk about the killin' and stuff, you know, because that's what was happenin' around us at that moment, and that's what we're readin' about, that's what we're seein' in our neighborhoods, and that's what we write about. . . . I'd rather be hated for what I am than loved for what I'm not."

Bushwick Bill nearly killed self after Geto Boys recorded second album. Title: *We Can't Be Stopped.* News accounts vary, most alleging he'd ingested some mix of painkillers and grain alcohol. While at apartment, reportedly ranted about wanting to die. Threatened to throw girlfriend's baby out of window unless she shot him. She complied. Pumped a round into his right eye. Photo of Bushwick being wheeled on hospital gurney, his shredded eye triumphantly exposed, became album cover.





Cover of* We Can't Be Stopped. *L-R: Willie D (who refused to be interrogated), Bushwick Bill, Mr. Scarface.

"Check this out. Explain this, right: The doctor was tellin' me that the way I was shot, the bullet itself, even though it was a hollow-point, right, the way I set it up, it was a hollow-point lead, the gunpowder sprayed into my eye, distributed itself evenly throughout my brain, the top part of the lead ricocheted off the bone in my nose and lodged into my eye, and there's no bone fragments. And the doctors say that they don't have no reason to operate and get the gunpowder out because it's evenly distributed, and it's not gonna hurt nothin'. There's no bone fragments.... They say they never heard of anything like that before. I healed quickly, I recovered quickly. And they still trippin' on it. They expected to have to go in and get the gunpowder out."

Now claims to be a Christian. Hints that miraculous intervention spared him. Volatile mix of anger and religion.

"There's spiritual stuff all around us, man. There's demons and there's archangels, you know what I'm sayin'? Sometimes those demons can drive you crazy, G."

ITEM #2—BRAD JORDAN (MR. SCARFACE):

Those with nothing to lose are a threat to order. Who has no future—middle-class punks or ghetto boys? Suburban twerps with guitars harmless. Street-level definition of punk: one who goes to jail and ends up needing stitches in ass. If violent music leads to action, society obligated to pull plug. Dodge City, Kansas, youth recently shot and killed random victim. Claimed he'd been "hypnotized" by Geto Boys' bloody lyrics.

"The dumbest shit anybody's ever said to me was that we caused a murder in Kansas. That was the dumbest shit I ever heard—that our music is hypnotic. You know what I'm sayin'? Before the album even came *out*. You know, that's bullshit. That's the dumbest shit I ever heard. [They said] it causes homicide and suicide. You don't see motherfuckers jumpin' out the window, you know what I'm sayin', or committin' suicide when they listen to the Geto Boys. Like Ozzy Osbourne, let's say. Or Guns N' Roses. You got motherfuckers killin' theyselves over that shit, man. They can **eat a dick**. That's all I want to say to David Geffen, Guns N' Roses, and all the rest of those hick, prejudiced motherfuckers. **Suck a dick. *Shuck* a dick. S-H-U-C-K a dick.**"

Calls self a "born killer." Unlike dreamy, reticent Bushwick, Scarface a manic-depressive needler with malevolent snicker. Chooses targets like a hired gunman. Aims at bourgeois blacks. Anti-assimilationist.

"You know what I really, really hate? Is when motherfuckers get all the way up there, you know, in their business, let's say, and they schoolin' in business, and they forget where they came from. I ain't gonna say no names, man, but they know who they are, and they can **eat a dick**."

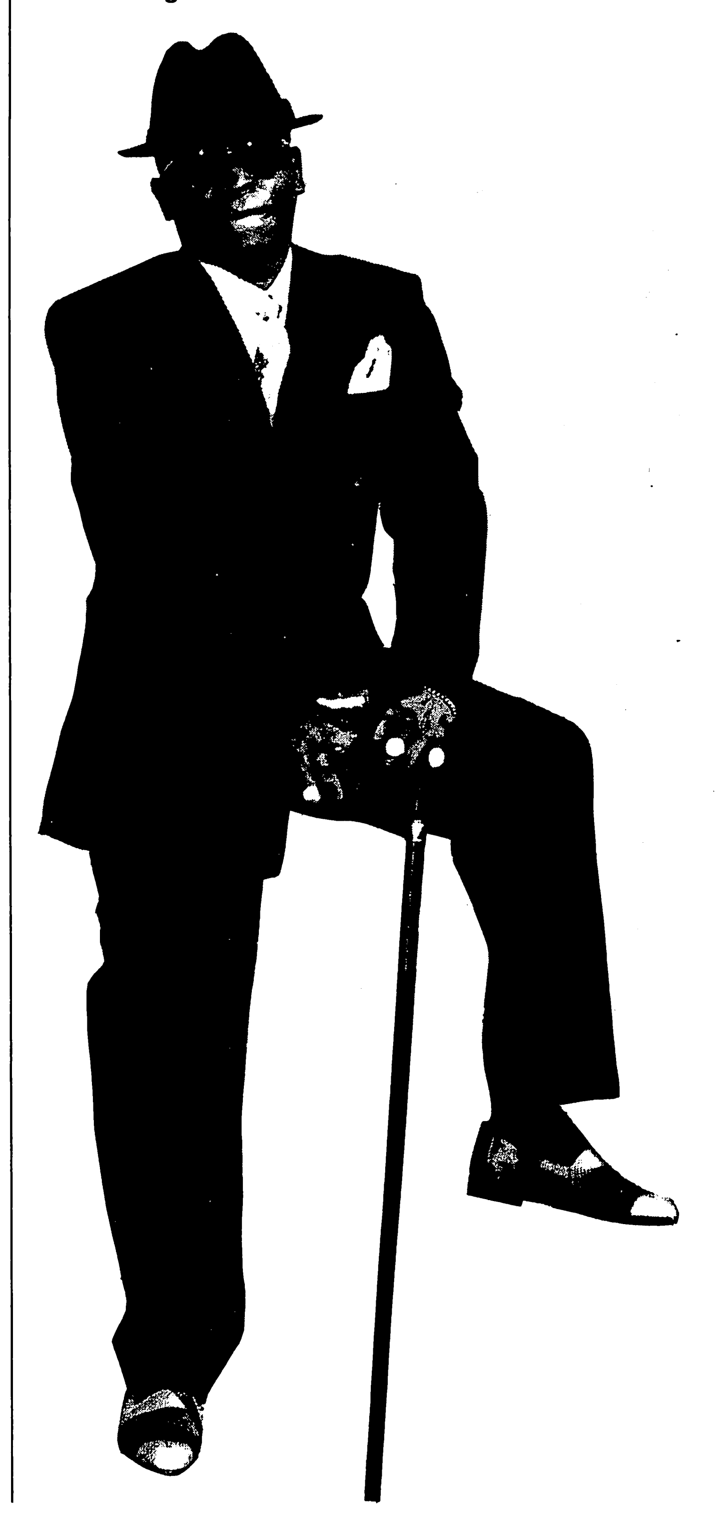
Territorial. Xenophobic. Criticizes Iranian and Vietnamese immigrants pouring into Houston. Foments unrest between minorities.

"I know one motherfuckin' thing—they come down here with that bullshit, we gonna ship they motherfuckin' ass back over there to Vietnam. Because this is Vietnam here, man. Man, this whole motherfuckin' world, man, is a big fuckin' war zone. You know what I'm sayin'? It's just Americans against Americans, you know.... 'Cause if one of them motherfuckers fuck up, we gonna blow this bitch up, man.... And then we got motherfuckers out from other countries that's makin' it even worse, you know what I'm sayin'? You got your motherfuckin' Iranians and your Chinese—I ain't got nothing against them, but they'll give them motherfuckers money to open up a convenience store before they give *us* money to open up a soul-food restaurant, you know what I'm sayin'? And then they feel that they superior. I went today, right, and I got a pack of cigarettes, and I accidentally stuck 'em in my pocket before I paid for 'em. I was at the counter, right? It's a habit—I stuck it in my pocket before I paid for it. And then I pulled it out and I said, 'Oh, I'm sorry.' And he said [mimics a Chinese accent], 'You gonna steal cigarette?' I pulled out a wad of hundreds and told him to **suck a dick** and left."

Spent teens selling cocaine. Making power moves. Hunted by Texas Rangers. Being unwanted "nigga" in heart of Bible Belt. Has alarming level of hostility toward dominant culture.

"That racism, the redneck shit? Them motherfuckers can **eat a dick**, too. They call us 'colored,' ha, but when they born, they red, and when they die, they purple. Now who's colored?... I'd like to say to all the country, redneck, perverted, cowboy-hat, boot-wearin' motherfuckers out there, the racist motherfuckers—*all* the motherfuckers with the cowboy hats and spurs and Wrangler jeans on—**suck a dick**. Straight up. And that's it. Tell 'em to **suck *my* dick**. Make it specific."

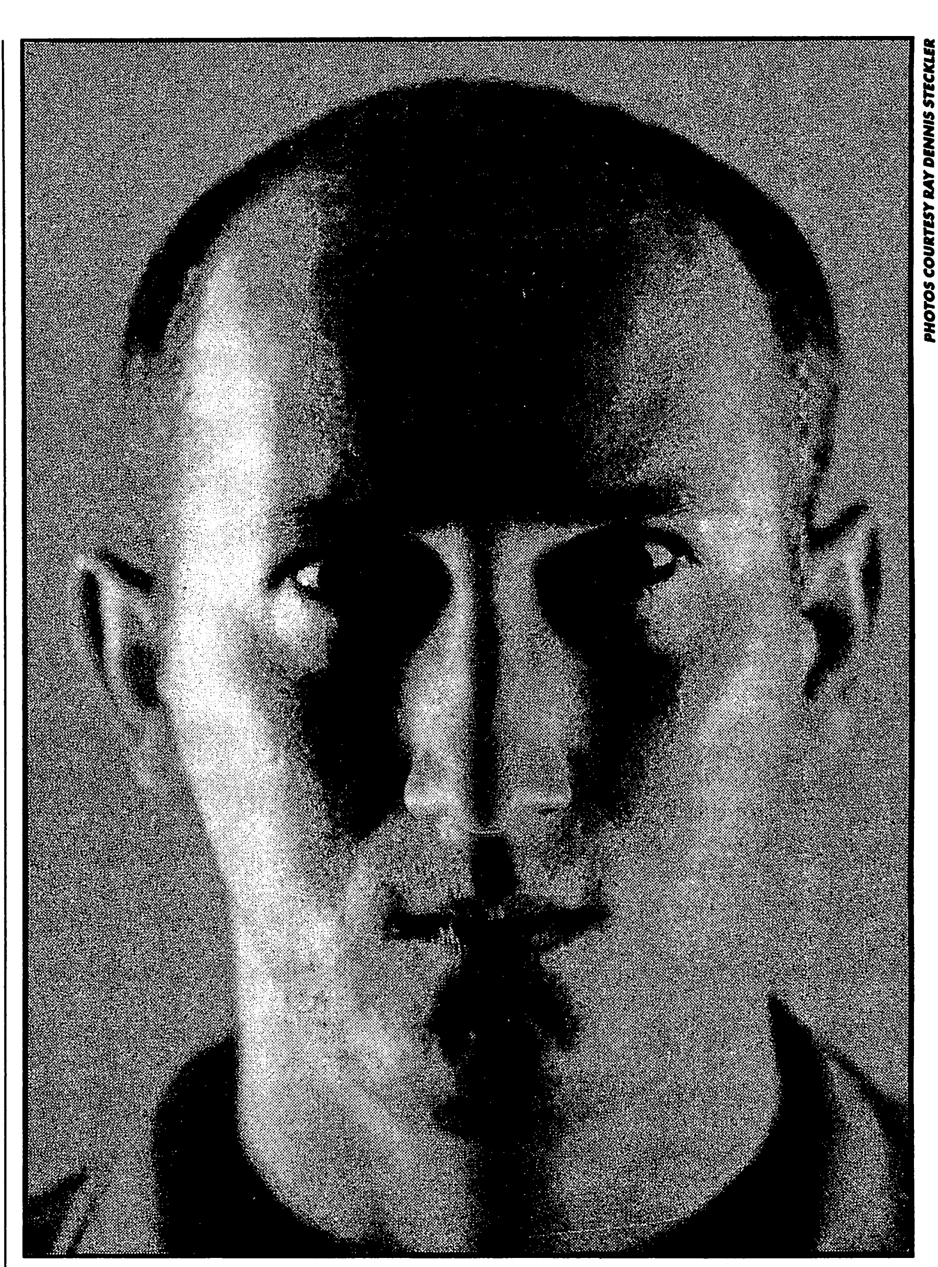
Quotes submitted as evidence of intractable sociopathy. Hopefully, Your Honor, these will convince you of the problem's gravity so we can take care of the Geto Boys and I can get back to the golf course. ■



misfit a

THE SAGA OF RAY DENNIS STECKLER

A NOT-SO-INCREDIBLY STRANGE DIRECTOR WHO STOPPED MAKING MOVIES IN HOLLYWOOD AND BECAME MIXED-UP IN VEGAS



PHOTOS COURTESY RAY DENNIS STECKLER

Ray Dennis Steckler, a.k.a. Cash Flagg, Sven Christian, and Wolfgang Schmidt: "People would think that because of the movies I made that I was psychotic."

Don't compare Ray Dennis Steckler to *anything*, or he'll get really pissed at you. He defends his uniqueness like most men guard their testes. To his credit, his films are nearly indescribable, resembling nothing else in the motion-picture pantheon. A renegade meteorite hurtling through a no-budget void, he has a singular vision. He might be the only one who's able to *see* it, but it's his.

"If somebody comes up and says, 'You remind me of something,' they're on my shit list," he says, reclining in his Las Vegas headquarters. "That's it. I don't want—no, no. Forget it. Don't do that. Seriously. It's just, I don't want to hear it." Thousands of feet of film surround him. Some of it's unedited, some is too old to be developed. Ray maintains that not a frame of it is derivative. He claims

no historical referents and gets angry when others seek to emulate *him.* "A guy called me up the other day, and he's directing some films. I says, 'So, what's your goal?' He says, 'I just want to be like you.' I says, 'Oh. Fine, but I don't want to be like *you.*' And he says, 'What?' I says, 'You *heard* what I said. *Don't* be like me. You're making me mad. I don't *want* anybody to be like me.' [He said,] 'Oh, I'm sorry. That was a compliment.' [I said,] 'No, it *wasn't* a compliment. Just do your own thing. I appreciate the offer, but let's forget about it. Now, go do your own movies. You don't want to be like me.' "

Maybe not, but the mere *titles* of Steckler's films—*The Incredibly Strange Creatures who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies, Rat Pfink a Boo Boo,* and *The Hollywood Strangler Meets the Skid Row Slasher,* to name a few—are more entertaining than ninety-nine percent of the celluloid dung out there. Reeking of a poor man's surrealism, his movies feature the one element Fellini and Buñuel forgot: FUN. Unlike the highbrow schmucks, his films are watchable, uninfected with pretense.

"I don't know if I'm a genius," he says in a reedy voice, "but I just do what I feel like doing, and that's dangerous in our world, isn't it? I don't make any excuses for anything. If I feel like doing something, that's what I go dooooo." He stretches out the last syllable of each sentence as if savoring the wisdom of what he's said. A dedicated family man, he hangs his kids' drawings on his bathroom wall. Mustachioed and less emaciated than he was in his sixties movies, Steckler seems breezily at peace with himself—so gracious, he doesn't even say anything when Debbie farts. He's definitely not the bug-eyed murderer he depicts in his films. In fact, he takes offense when we insinuate that he operates from a wellspring of inner weirdness.

"People would think that because of the movies I made that I *was* psychotic," says the director with a name befitting a serial killer. "I'm a misfit. I just don't fit in anywhere else. The way I was always treated by executives and things for the most part was that I didn't fit in with their system.... I just didn't fit. Sorry. I was fired at every studio that I can think I ever worked at, and for reasons that are unbelievable.... When I wanted a shot to do something a little bit more, they would say, 'No, you don't know how to do that. You only make cheap, crappy movies. You don't know how to really work with something and make it look slick'—that's it. That's what I was reaching for. The most derogatory thing I've gotten through the years was the word 'slick.' In the system, my movies did not look slick."

So *fuck* slickness, if it means the gauzy, honey-dripping, *On Golden Pond* look of every Hollywood movie from the past fifteen years. *Fuggit.* Jam a firecracker up its rectum and blow it to pieces, because life isn't a Grecian urn and movies shouldn't be, either.

"They use big stars, big directors, good film and camera equipment," says Steckler with an amused air that covers traces of enmity, "but somehow, when it's all put together, it's not the real thing. It just looks like plastic. It's synthetic.... The people see the movie, and they don't *want* to see it a second time, the majority of them. They say, 'Well, I've seen it, why do I want to see it again?' Because it doesn't have any *soul* to it."

Steckler found *his* soul on the sooty, eroded streets of Reading, Pennsylvania, a bleak factory town straight out of Dickens. Endowed with what he says is a massive intellect, he started grade school at four years old, a misfit in the making. He shot his first films in his mid-teens, little 8mm jobs starring neighborhood kids. After a stint in the Army, he went to study theater at Carnegie-Mellon.

"I met some of the people in my class in Pittsburgh," he sighs, "and, uh, they weren't my kind of people. I mean, they just weren't. They were real *theater* people, let's put it that way, OK?... I couldn't communicate with 'em. I really couldn't. I came from a tough neighborhood. I grew up in a tough neighborhood. In the Army, I associated with tougher people. I spent two years in Korea. I don't know, it was just like—maybe I assumed wrong—but it seemed like it was like fairyland to me at that point in my life. There was no reality." Good for you, Ray. We hate theater people, too. Why, those mousse-wearing, tune-singing, Andrew Lloyd Webber-worshipping pantomimes! They should be rounded up and *killed.* You should be *proud* that you didn't fit in with them.

Accepting an offer from a movie-biz chum, Ray hit the ejector button out of college and landed in L.A. While living in director Timothy Carey's garage with dogs and horses, he photographed *The World's Greatest Sinner*



Rat Pfink a Boo Boo *('65): zero-budget drive-in dada.*



Wild Ones on Wheels *('62): "Preacher Man" on the delinquent rampage.*

in 1962. Trash-movie mogul Arch Hall, Sr., saw enough in the young misfit to let him direct and star in *Wild Guitar.* Ray met producer George J. Morgan on the set, and the two joined forces to excrete some of the oddest filmic turds ever to float in the cesspool of Hollywood history.

The first was *The Incredibly Strange Creatures...*, which, at a reported cost of thirty-eight thousand dollars, is said to be the *most* expensive of all his films. Ray proved adept at working on insanely low budgets, using a stock troupe of characters and exploiting his own Richard Speckian looks as a leading man. Some of his budgets were *so* minuscule, he couldn't afford sound, so he dubbed in dialogue snippets after shooting. Even on nickels and dimes, he achieved a comic-book sense of overstatement.

"You know, I'm a chameleon," he says. "I can adapt to whatever has to be done.... Somebody comes in and you say, 'We'll shoot next week,' and they ask me for a script. Then I have to say, 'Well, there *is* no script.' And they don't understand *that*, either. But out there working for a French director in Europe, they wouldn't even question it. I mean, uh, was there a script on *Alphaville*? Or, I mean, did Truffaut always have a script? I don't know. In Europe, they just had a good tiiiime."

His ability to change or discard a script to suit his whims is legendary. Ray says he became annoyed with actor Herb Robins while filming *The Thrill Killers*, so he scribbled in a scene where Robins gets poisoned. A similar fate befell a petulant male lead in *Body Fever*—Steckler ripped a wig off the actor's head, fired him, and played the role himself, hairpiece and all. As he was filming a psycho thriller titled *The Depraved*, Ray grew bored and yanked the plot entirely, turning a violent action film into the lighthearted *Rat Pfink a Boo Boo.*

He wastes no energy searching for props or locations, either. Many of his films integrate what appear to be home movies of parades, rodeos, and airplane shows, scenes which have nothing to do with the story. Steckler, though, inverts the directorial process and molds the plot around his footage.

Ray's equally utilitarian in his casting, frequently placing friends and family members in main roles. Pierre Agostino, who starred as the Hollywood Strangler, was originally hired to paint Steckler's house. Ron Jason, leading man in the recent *Vegas* films, got his start as Ray's air-conditioner repairman. "I'm looking for a plumber right now," Steckler threatens.

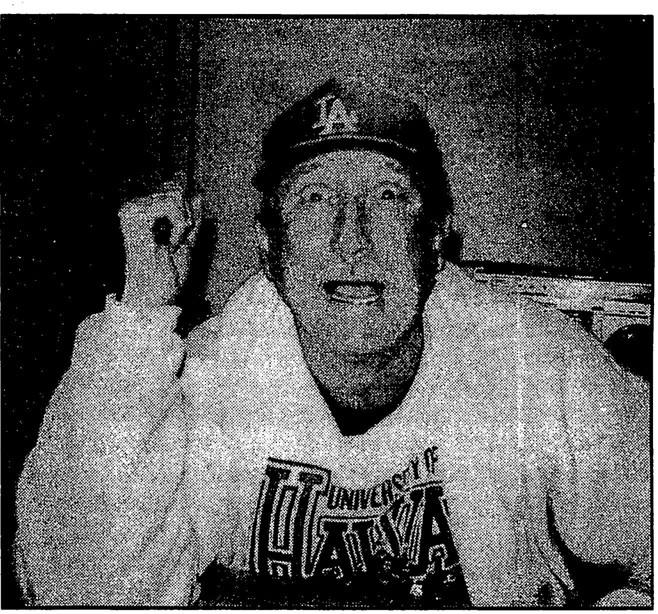
He worked constantly in Hollywood during the sixties, mainly directing features. He also shot commercials, did freelance editing, photographed Janis Joplin's first TV spot, and directed a music video ("Open My Eyes") for Todd Rundgren's Nazz. Through it all, he developed an ulcerous disgust for the film industry.

"No one ever did anything for me," he says with the tone of someone who's been stung. "I'm serious—it's like, 'What's wrong? Did I do something wrong or something?'... I went through that whole period of second-guessing and third-guessing and trying to figure out what everybody's problem was with me.... And then I went through that compromising stage where I compromised. Then I was *really* in bad shape, see?... In Hollywood, I think the less reliable you are, the more people want you, because the people who hire them are just the same way."

Why did Moses quit his job as a hallucinating shepherd in Egypt and set out for Israel? Why did Columbus ditch those Spanish nights in favor of a cold, inhospitable New World? Why, oh why, did Ray Dennis Steckler forsake gainful employment in Hollywood for an uncertain future in Las Vegas? "Hollywood's the only town in the world that they spend more time waiting for somebody to fail than succeed," he says. "They can't wait to see somebody fail, regardless of whether they lose *their* job. They want to see you fail.... If you tried to do your own thing, your own real *style*, you couldn't. You were locked in—the sponsors, the boys in the tennis shoes from Chicago, they had to do everything their way. You know what I'm saying? They picked the people. You had no control over anything. And I just, I like to have control. Even if it's a terrible film, I like to know that I'm the cause of it.... I don't think I really make terrible films, because I have enough style that I get certain things out of it, even with a one-to-one ratio."

Having wrested himself from Tinseltown's pincers, he went on to do some of his best work, most of it straight-up gore. The seventies gave birth to *Blood Shack* and *The Hollywood Strangler Meets the Skid Row Slasher*. The eighties and early nineties have spawned *The Las Vegas Serial Killer, The Las Vegas Strangler, The Las Vegas Thrill Killers,* and *Las Vegas Amateur Models*. Do you think he identifies with his new domicile?

"I came up here, there were blue skies, clouds, lots of places to park in 1970," he says. "But I went back and forth for years to Hollywood—I had to go back there to eat. And then I just said, 'I don't really need all that back there anymore.'... I think that the best thing you can do about the film industry is stay *away* from it. You'll live happily ever after." ■



Still Steckler after all these years: Ray today.



Carolyn Brandt acts terrorized in* Bloody Jack the Ripper *(unreleased).

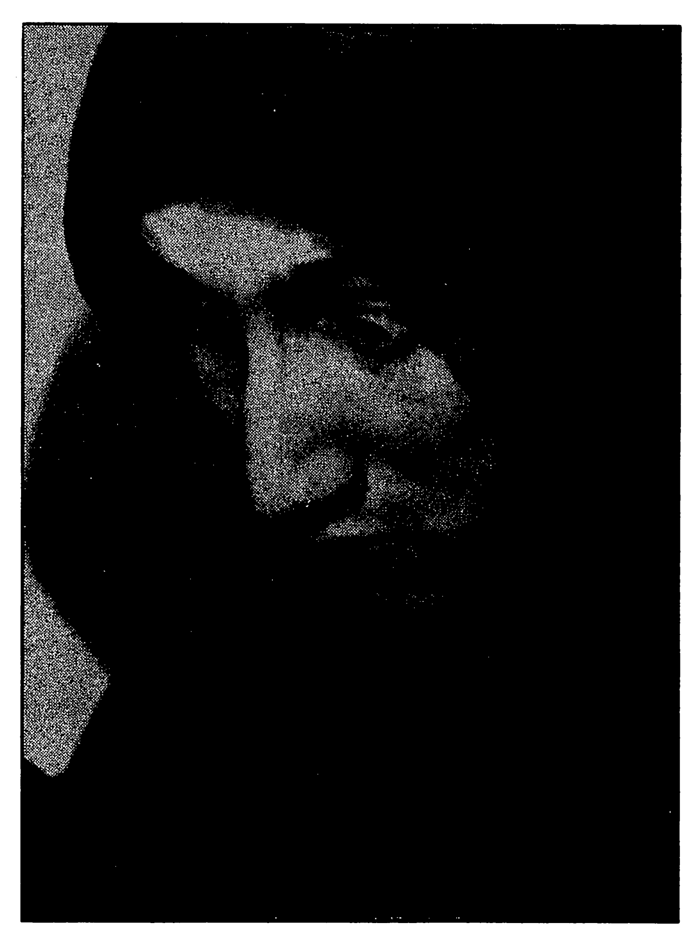
steckler for detail

Tragically, Ray Dennis Steckler's more recent films, as well as* Bloody Jack the Ripper *(1972) are currently unavailable to the proletarian hordes. The following synopses cover his videocassette releases. You can also catch a gangly young Steckler being thrown into a swimming pool in the eternally stinky* Eegah! *(1962). Since most major video chains prefer to stock Tom Hanks comedies and Chuck Norris sequels, Ray's tapes can be hard to locate. If you can't find them in your one-horse town, contact Mascot Video in Las Vegas.

Wild Ones on Wheels *(also released as* **Drivers to Hell**, *B&W, 1962)*
The film which hatched Ray Dennis Steckler onto the Hollywood scene. Ray (who did the photography but didn't direct) stars as a balding, bespectacled bebop cat called "Preacher Man," member of a hot-rod gang searching for a quarter of a million bucks stashed in the Mojave Desert. Preacher Man and his pals do typically thuggish things, such as terrorizing a roadside cafe, torturing a woman by wagging a lizard in her face, and engaging in a "chickie run," which, like the one in *Rebel Without a Cause*, ends in death. With bad lighting and a greasily bombastic jazz soundtrack, the movie is more closely related to fifties-style vice flicks than to Steckler's later experiments.

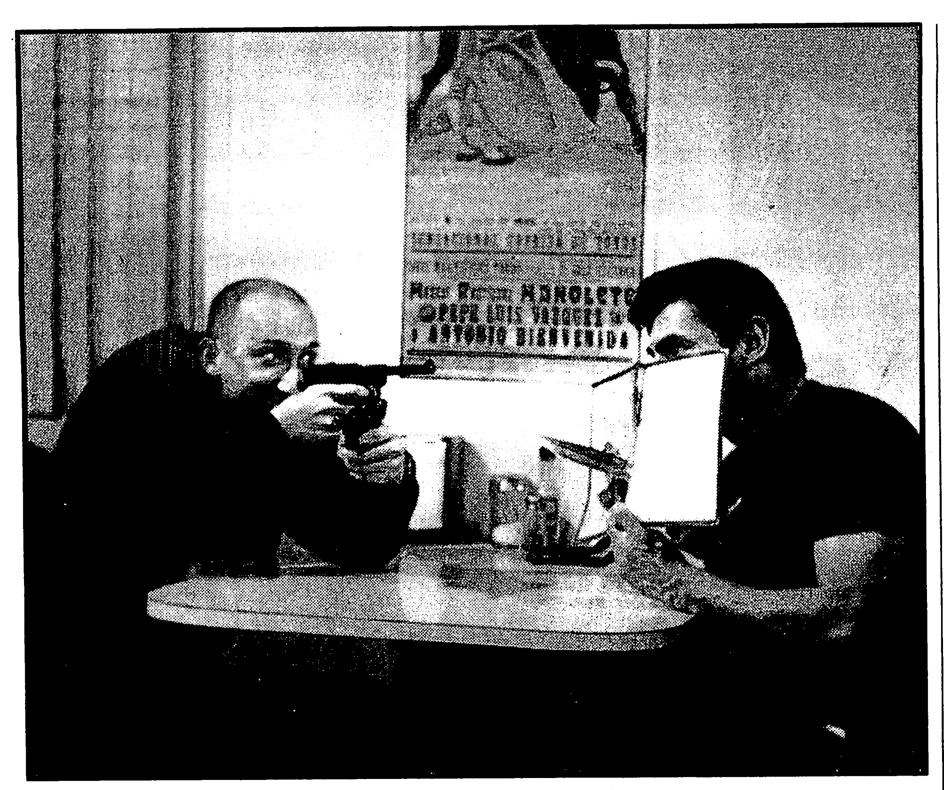
Wild Guitar *(B&W, 1962)*
Steckler's directorial debut tells the tale of Bud Eagle, a frog-faced pop singer who arrives in Hollywood with only enough cash for coffee and a donut but becomes "the hottest thing in the country" within, oh, eighteen or nineteen seconds. Bud, as wholesomely American as a warm enema, performs some of the clumsiest rockabilly ever etched on wax. Arch Hall, Jr., portrays him so stiffly, it seems as if his torso had been cemented to his hips. Arch Hall, Sr., plays Mr. McCauley, a vampiric record promoter who turns teen sensations into alcoholic wretches. From the moment McCauley meets Bud, his fangs are firmly planted in the young boy's neck. Steckler (under the "Cash Flagg" moniker) portrays "Steak," a woman-slapping, pistol-whipping psycho. With all the charm of a moray eel, Steak drives a wedge between Bud and his beloved ice-skating Vickie (Nancy Czar). It's blindingly obvious that Bud symbolizes everything that's decent, McCauley and Steak everything that's pooh-pooh ca-ca. In the end, good old antiseptic hetero love conquers all.

The Incredibly Strange Creatures who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies *(also released as* **Teenage Psycho Meets Bloody Mary**, *Color, 1964)*
Paranoid organ music, ultra-vivid color, and stock footage of roller coasters highlight what the trailer describes as "the world's first monster musical." **T.I.S.C.W.S.L.A.B.M.U.Z.** stars Cash Flagg (Steckler) as Jerry, a lanky beatnik who utters such things as, "The world's here to be enjoyed, not to make you depressed." Jerry and some friends visit a Long Beach carnival and stumble upon Madam Estrella (Brett O'Hara), a sideshow fortuneteller. Estrella, with her crystal ball, hypnotic spiral wheel, and facial wart ("the wart of horror," according to the ad) works her Gypsy voodoo on the impressionable youth. Jerry, naturally, becomes a mixed-up zombie and murders carnival dancer Marge Neilson (Steckler's onetime wife Carolyn Brandt, who resembles Patti Smith with mascara and shaven armpits). The action is intercut with laughably plodding musical numbers executed by a swarm of bouffants. The film has a dreamy timelessness, but *ANSWER Me!* has repeatedly found it to be a snoozefest, the least interesting item in Steckler's *oeuvre.*



Steckler as a mixed-up zombie.

The Thrill Killers *(also released as* **The Maniacs are Loose!**, *B&W, 1965)*
Sullen Hollywood wannabe Joe Saxon (Brick Bardo) ambles down the Walk of Fame in the opening frames as a moribund voiceover chides him for being "caught in the world of nonreality." Meanwhile, child-rearing breadwinner Dennis Kesdekian (Atlas King, who's "caught in the world of *re*ality") hops in his station wagon and hits the freeway. A kindhearted sort, Dennis stops for a hitchhiker (Steckler, as Mort "Mad Dog" Click), who leans in the passenger's window, grins, and blows out Kesdekian's brains point-blank. This all happens *before* the credits. As night falls, screenstruck Joe Saxon and his wife Liz (Liz Renay, who would later star in a mother-daughter strip act) host a raucous party for Hollywood executives. "Mad Dog" Click, on the dark side of town, picks up a



Mort "Mad Dog" Click (Steckler) taunts Gary Kent in* The Thrill Killers *('65).

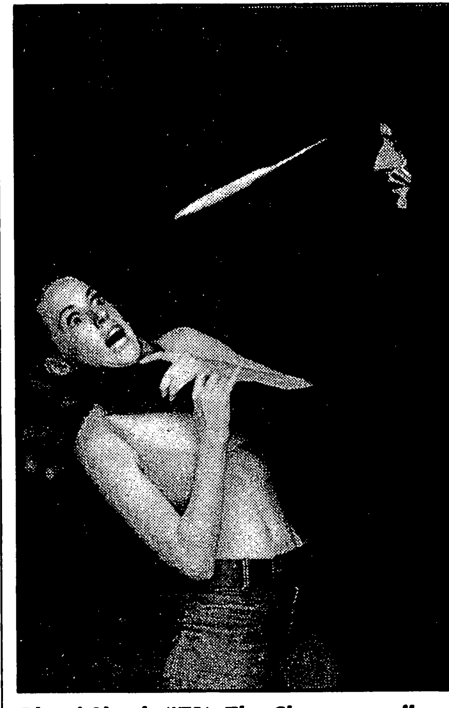
dance-hall girl and escorts her to a hotel room. He kisses, then wallops, her. "People are no good!" he snorts. "I hate people!... They're no good! You're cheap! I hate you! I'm gonna kill you!" In a montage worthy of Eisenstein, he beats and stabs her to death while neon lights flash on and off. Mort then hooks up with a trio of axe-wielding escaped mental patients who are having their own fun up near Topanga Canyon. After more killings, chase scenes, and the inevitable justice being served, Joe Saxon lands a leading role in a Hollywood murder film, forever entrenched in the world of nonreality.

Rat Pfink a Boo Boo *(B&W, 1965)*
Steckler's best, an unparalleled chunk of drive-in dada. One viewing will cause permanent cerebral dislocation. With home movies and dubbed dialogue, Ray had originally set out to film **The Depraved**, a gleamingly sadistic screenplay reminiscent of **The Thrill Killers**. According to the script, Carolyn Brandt was to have starred as Cee Bee Beaumont, an actress kidnapped by leering psychopaths who select her name at random from the White Pages. Cee Bee's boyfriend Lonnie Lord (Ron Haydock, under the pseudonym "Vin Saxon") plays a crater-faced rock star who sings four songs unrelated to the film's text. Midway through filming, Steckler decided to chuck the screenplay and have Cee Bee's gardener Titus Twimbly (Titus Moede) and Lonnie Lord emerge from a closet as Rat Pfink and Boo Boo, Batman and Robin on a Third World budget. Fistfights, chases, an irrelevant cameo by Kogar the Ape, and a beach party ensue to Henri Price's brain-scrubbingly psychedelic soundtrack. The revamped screenplay's title was supposed to have been **Rat Pfink *and* Boo Boo**, but Steckler couldn't cough up the thirty bucks needed to change the typo. Reportedly made for between four and five thousand dollars, **Rat Pfink** is shitloads weirder (and more innovative) than **Un Chien Andalou**.

The Lemon Grove Kids Meet the Monsters *(Color, 1966)*
The primo manifestation of Steckler's Huntz Hall obsession, **Lemon Grove** comes off like the Bowery Boys on bad acid. It's a compilation of three short films (**The Lemon Grove Kids Meet the Green Grasshopper and the Vampire Lady From Outer Space, The Lemon Grove Kids... Go Hollywood!**, and, simply, **The Lemon Grove Kids**) in which the director apparently urged the actors to play it as *broadly* as possible. The bulk consists of sped-up Keystone Cops slapstick, with the requisite slide whistles, whimsical music, and heads being bopped. Don Snyder sings the Lemon Grove Kids' theme song on his folk guitar. As the villainous Killer Krump, Herb Robins wanders around looking like Joey Bishop's understudy in some lost Rat Pack flick. Insufferably zany, unbearably wacky, an irritating childlike feel pervades the entire project. Recommended only if you have kids, in which case you have more problems than we care to help you with. Nevertheless, Steckler says it's his fave.

Sinthia, the Devil's Doll *(Color, 1968)*
Ingmar Bergman meets Kenneth Anger's **Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome** at an off-off-Broadway production of **Oh, Calcutta!** while the audience tokes hash oil. Filmed in predominantly red and green lighting at what must have been the height of the false-eyelash craze, the "plot" concerns Sinthia (Shula Roan), a twenty-year-old with a *nasty* Electra complex. With a shrink's aid, she recalls how she slaughtered her parents at age twelve. Through an agonizing series of flashbacks, she descends into "a red, swirling sea of blood." Unidentified humans perform three-way oral copulation. Men with painted faces chant Sinthia's name. Tits bobble all over the place. Sinthia masturbates, has a lesbian encounter with a dissatisfied housewife, and screams a lot. She regains consciousness, announces, "I killed myself, doctor," and is declared cured. She leaves the psychiatrist's office and greets her fiancé, who looks—uh-oh—*exactly like her father*. Steckler's backers found the original cut "too European" and forced him to add the psychoanalytic scenes. Enraged with their tampering, he released the film under the pseudonym "Sven Christian."

Body Fever *(also released as* **The Last Original B-Movie** *and* **Super Cool**, *Color, 1969)*
A detective yarn revolving around a hundred and fifty thousand dollars of stolen heroin. Steckler plays Charles Smith, a lazy private dick who narrates *à la* Joe Friday: "I like a funky broad who lets ya know what a really rotten night's sleep she's had." In a hilarious parody of **Breathless**, he stares at a Bogart poster and scratches his chin. Smith is given three grand and seventy-two hours to find junk thief Carrie Erskine (Carolyn Brandt). En route to Carrie, the suave private eye bones most of his female



Blood Shack *('71): The Chooper strikes.*



Floppy-breasted woman struggles with the Hollywood Strangler.

interviewees. When he finally finds Erskine, she offers him seventy-five thousand clams to keep quiet and help her fight a hairy smack dealer named Big Mack (Bernard Fein). Smith accepts, and the pair rapidly fall in luvvvv. One scene shows them running together with a satchel of heroin as joyfully as if they were in a douche commercial. Charles and Carrie unload the powder, give Big Mack his comeuppance, and resume their schtupping.

Blood Shack *(also released as* **The Chooper**, *Color, 1971)*
Starkly beautiful desert photography frames the legend of The Chooper, a sword-swinging lunatic ghost who haunts an abandoned hut in Death Valley. The "blood shack" is said to have "a hundred and fifty years' history of death in it"—sounds like our Hollywood apartment building! Jason Wayne stars as Daniel, a spindly, Mansonesque ranch hand who buries The Chooper's leftovers after each slaying. With Carolyn Brandt as the aptly named Carol Brandt and special appearances by Linda and Laura Steckler (yep, Ray's kids) and Peanuts the Pony. Steckler directed under the *nom de film* "Wolfgang Schmidt." The movie's impact is considerably augmented by Frank A. Coe's violin-heavy score, the perfect soundtrack by which to commit multiple stabbings. It's only fifty-five minutes from start to finish and so scary, you might even shit your pants.

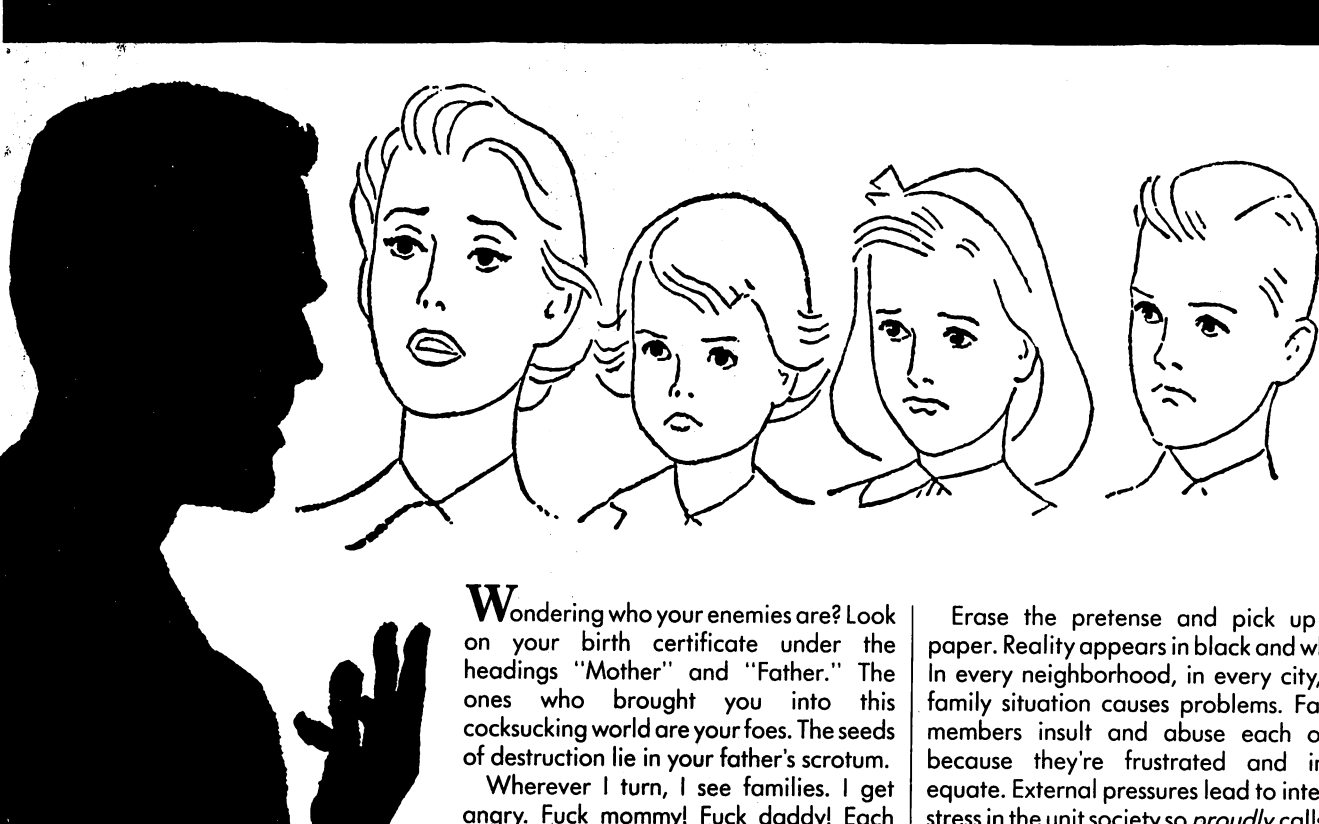
The Hollywood Strangler Meets the Skid Row Slasher *(Color, 1979)*
"She wants it.... They *all* want it.... They like it.... She wants me to do it to her.... Make her wait for it.... Slow, slow.... Let her wait for it a little longer.... Soon she'll be out of her misery." A heartwarming film about love's redemptive power. Entirely dubbed with Steckler's echoey narration, it traces the lethal path of the Hollywood Strangler (Pierre Agostino), a denim-wearing photographer who snaps pictures of semi-nude models in their apartments, then plunges his thumbs in their necks. He spends his off hours stroking pigeons and muttering non sequiturs about a former girlfriend named Marsha, who, it is assumed, *really* did him wrong. The Skid Row Slasher (Carolyn Brandt) is a prudish bookstore clerk who slits the throats of reprobate alkies until blood spurts from their mouths. She jogs at the ocean's edge after murdering, apparently to work out some of her tension. The Strangler and Slasher eventually meet, but neither lasts very long.

The Las Vegas Serial Killer *(Color, 1987)*
A sequel of sorts to **Hollywood Strangler**, starring Pierre Agostino as Johnathon Klick, newly paroled after serving six years for seven murders. (Some justice system, eh?) Though he snags a job as a Vegas pizza deliveryman, he looks bitter and wrinkled. He hits the local strip parlors and soon returns to his old ways—wherever there are women in swimsuits, he's there, strangling them. He's coldhearted enough to choke one woman to death in front of her Smurf doll. Meanwhile, Clarence (Ron Jason) and Jack (Chris Cave) hit Sin City to snatch purses, mug hippies, and slobber at anonymous tushes. The audience is given no indication as to who they are—undercover cops? Petty thieves? Vigilantes? Another silent film with sparse dubbing, it approaches **Rat Pfink**'s incoherence. Clarence and Jack eventually shoot Klick and throw the gun in a dumpster. A pair of boys find the weapon, smile, and the film ends in a freeze frame of their happy faces. After the credits run (including a nod to Laura A. Hetherington as "Psychiatric Consultant"), we hear a lone gunshot. ■



The Las Vegas Thrill Killers ***(unreleased): anonymous dead chick.***

THE FAMILY MUST BE ELIMINATED



Wondering who your enemies are? Look on your birth certificate under the headings "Mother" and "Father." The ones who brought you into this cocksucking world are your foes. The seeds of destruction lie in your father's scrotum.

Wherever I turn, I see families. I get angry. Fuck mommy! Fuck daddy! Each member plays an assigned role. They're like actors in a Broadway play. So original!

Generation after generation of losers. They not only had you, they sculpted your flaws. They're responsible for your emotional insecurities and physical limitations. Unfortunately, you can't pick your parents. Blood type, eye color, bone structure, and hormones match, but not much else. They're stranger than strangers.

Home sweet home isn't. Psychologists estimate that ninety-five percent of all families are fucked-up. Most mortals' earliest recollections are of family fights. You remember the screaming, insulting, and furniture crashing from your formative years. When the phone rang, everything was OK. It's what the neighbors didn't see. It's the brutal reality behind closed doors.

Erase the pretense and pick up the paper. Reality appears in black and white. In every neighborhood, in every city, the family situation causes problems. Family members insult and abuse each other because they're frustrated and inadequate. External pressures lead to internal stress in the unit society so *proudly* calls the family. Daddy's home! Now the fun begins! **CRASH! BANG! BOOM!**

It's a chain reaction of anger. The old man cracks up one afternoon. The boss man pushed him. Upset, poppa goes home, beats his wife, and fucks his daughter. Or the situation really gets out of hand. Father makes a decision. He slaughters everyone in the house, even the dog!

In the household next door, the parents are smacking their kids. The kids are smashing frying pans over their grandparents' heads. Under another rooftop, we find parents eavesdropping, snooping, meddling, molesting, torturing, and plotting to kill their disobedient teenagers. In the house next to that one, a wife seeks a restraining order against her raging "Prince Charming." He later comes back

and shoots her brains onto the microwave-oven door. Happily ever after? No, scum! Everybody hates each other's guts!

Abuse statistics rise each year. Guess what else continues to spread? Faulty genes containing cancer, heart disease, retardation, addiction, alcoholism, and insincerity. The family's genetic codes dictate blandness, anxiety, sadness, nagging, and general confusion. The bullshit repeats itself like a broken record.

At home, you learn to hate. Society silently hates you, and you feel their hate daily. All this hate swells up until it explodes. Don't you just dig it? Your parents have fucked you up! The damage is irreversible. Just because they supplied the semen and egg doesn't mean that they know what's right. They don't. They're conformist pigs who had you because all their friends were having children. They only know what they were taught, and that's what they teach you. They're blind to anything opposing their instilled propaganda, their primitive code of ethics. They want you to be just like them. If you're not, they'll undermine your dreams. They'd like to decide your fate. If you try to defend yourself, it's a losing proposition. When you confront them with past hurts, they deny everything.

Fascism begins at home. The family kills creativity. They're a regimental brigade begetting boredom. They're a squadron of robots. They feign happiness in order to live up to social expectations. But they're miserable on the inside. If their secrets and dirty laundry were revealed, maybe they'd admit their pain. I doubt it!

When blood relatives corral around for barbecues, bar mitzvahs, christenings, engagement parties, birthday bashes, and holidays, it's phony. Underneath those plastic smiles is



disgust. There's no communication between these people. They down a few drinks and rattle out superficial chatter to mask their seething venom. Sober, they couldn't hack each other.

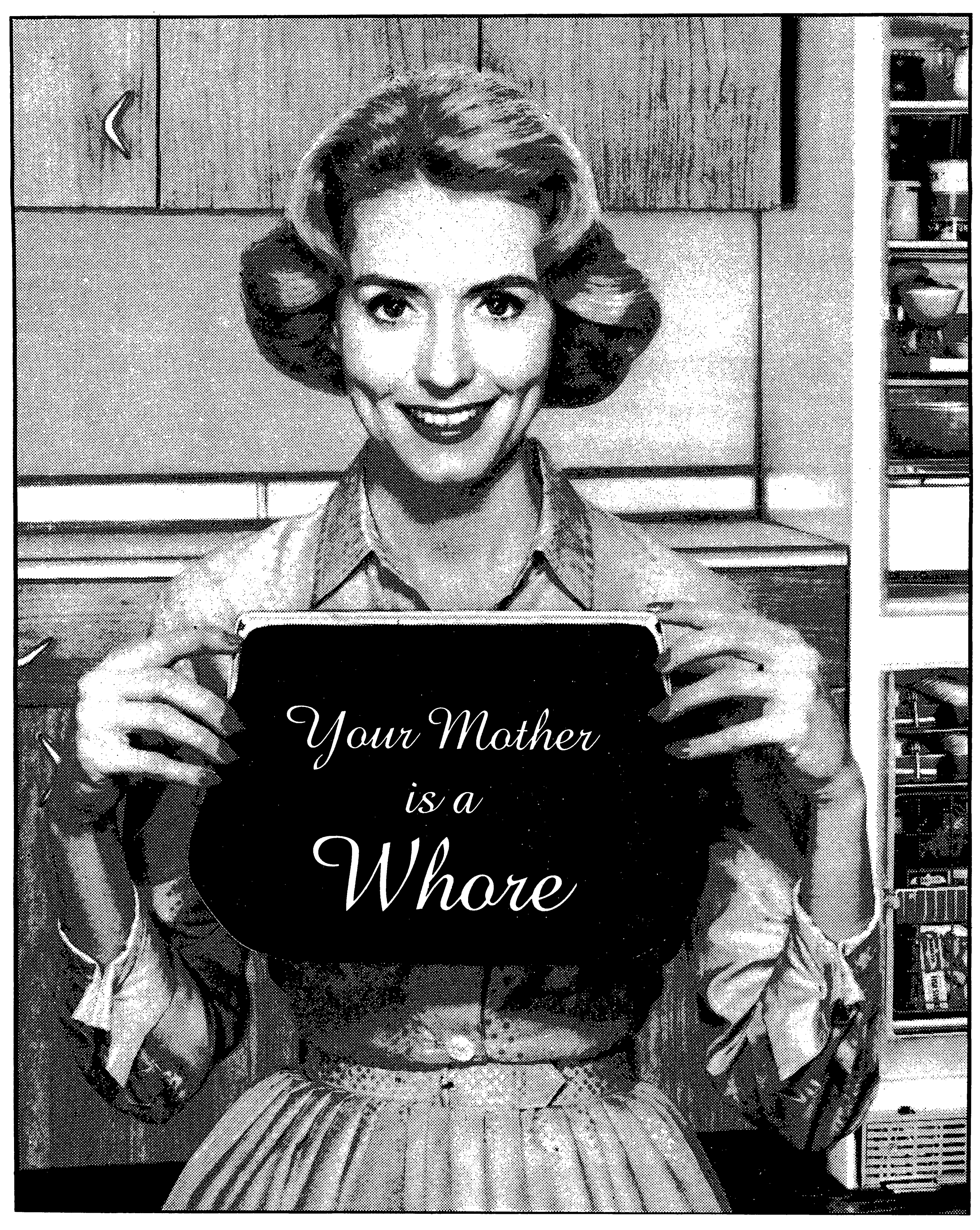
No matter how much your family hates you, they demand your love. When they're wrinkled, white-haired, and using a walker, it dawns on them that they're going to kick the bucket soon. That's when they get especially possessive: "You're still family.... I'm still your parent.... Please love me.... Take care of me like I took care of you." Take care of them—kill them.

But when they finally drop dead, you're still not free. Their negativity clings to you like a second skin. Invisible injuries remain in your mind. Memories don't die.

Don't be so bitter, you say. Yes, it's possible that there are a *few* warm, loving, supportive families. It's also possible that elephants can fly. Only in fairy tales does the family provide compassion, confidence, friendship, and trust.

The day comes when the healthiest thing is to sever the tie completely. Get out as quickly as you can, and don't leave a forwarding address. At least in the animal kingdom, cats and dogs let go of their young. They don't hang around to bother them or to critique their lives. Likewise, human beings *must*

YOUR FATHER IS AN IDIOT



discard their families.

Determine what their worst fear is and make it a reality. Tell your father he has a small dick (I know *I* did.) Tell your mother your father cheated on her. Mail love letters from imaginary mistresses. Tell the next-door neighbors you were sexually abused, *especially* if you weren't. Call up your grandparents and say, "Why does daddy keep *touching* me down there, grandma?" Using an X-Acto knife, cut your face out of every

family photo. Take pictures of naked neighborhood children and drop them off at a Fotomat under your father's name. Snap Polaroids of your parents as they get out of the shower and use them for blackmail. Argue with your parents in crowds. Hire friends to beat them up. Issue death threats on each holiday. Insist you were adopted and have finally located your real parents. Legally change your last name. Go through their wallets and dresser drawers, destroying all forms of identification. Cancel their insurance, then crash the family car. Slip maggots into their breakfast cereal. Forge their names on checks. Hock your mother's wedding band. Call your father's boss and say that dad's an embezzler. Run out of your house screaming, "I'm not going to let you BEAT me anymore!" Plaster "WANTED" posters all over town accusing your parents of selling crack. Run into your mother's PTA meeting with a bag of cocaine and say, "Mom, you left this in the glove compartment!" If relatives are coming over, scatter used syringes on the living-room carpet. Interrupt mom and dad's lovemaking. Spray-paint the word "failure" over their bedpost. Make a bonfire of all family heirlooms. Blow up the house while your family sleeps. In everything you do, act as a mirror to the hate they created.

But most people won't be convinced. The family is their only source of stability. When family members die, they feel lonely and confused. So they come up with a brilliant idea, one with which they're familiar. They disgustingly reproduce and thus prolong the family problem. They don't comprehend that one smelly asshole leads to another! It's real life, and most people are miserable cockroaches. And just like cockroaches, they keep multiplying.

Don't reproduce! You're not a photocopier! There are *enough* people. Too, too many. I like the idea of the human race becoming extinct like dinosaurs. Pass the baton onto machines and let them run with it.

It's time to implement drastic procedures. Uproot your family tree. Get that axe out and start chopping. Then throw the wood chips into the fireplace and let the embers warm your body and soothe your messed-up mind. Say a silent prayer to Satan. You're emancipated. Enjoy yourSELF!

Stop the years of pain and degradation. Stop the human race. Birth control must be free. Jail all pregnant women. Force them to abort. If they refuse, assassinate them. If some get away, catch them and inject them with fatal medications. If they've popped out offspring, send these young delinquents to concentration camps where the only allowable reading material is *ANSWER Me!*

Put a lid on it, assholes! Infiltrate the public water system with contraceptives. Freely distribute spermicide creams and diaphragms at supermarkets and gas stations. Place condoms next to toothpick dispensers at deli counters. Resolve the bullshit once and for all!

I say when something's not working and is bad for you, don't do it anymore. You end a problem by ending it. The family sucks, so get rid of it. Elimination. Freedom. ■



I HATE WOMEN



We're told that little girls are made of "sugar and spice and everything nice." They dress in frilly pink lace. Bows and ribbons adorn their pigtails. They're small, delicate cherubs. Maurice Chevalier thanked heaven for little girls.

He's dead! And those fragile, sweet, petite brats he sang about grew up to be full-time bitches. Spineless cunts.



Go now, my friend, into a ladies' room and take a deep whiff. Smell it? It's the stench of pussy, the annoying aroma of VAGINA. Women's genitals crank out horrible cottage-cheeselike discharges. Chicks may spend hours preening in a bathroom, but it won't mask their rank. They baptize themselves with perfumes and squirt douches up their gashes in an endless pursuit of sparkling-clean femininity. The pungency of their colognes, hair sprays, nail polishes, and skin creams smells worse than rotted corpses. But at least these cosmetics smell better than the average rancid snatch.

When my husband first went down on me, he was shocked to find that he wasn't taking a trip to Sea World. He asked if I was from another planet. I had (and have) no smell. This is rarer than a talking mule. Whenever I've sniffed my bloodiest tampons, even ones with clots the size of egg yolks, there's no odor. I can't say the same for my "sisters."

There's nothing worse than a room full of smelly women. With ear-piercing voices, shrill laughs, and affected stances, they are talentless hens shamelessly cackling their needs. These yentas hang together in coffee klatches, feeding off gossip from their "girlfriends." But do they truly care about one another? Hell, no! They're battle-axes who eye each other suspiciously. They compete more viciously than men. Women were born to claw each other's eyes out. These wenches are not true friends and can't be trusted. These whores congregate to discuss such vital topics as how many carats lie in their diamond wedding band, who's pregnant, the latest action on the soaps, their mother-in-law's lung operation, home appliances, linoleum, breast implants, and what brand of coffee tastes best. It's downhill from there. As they age, their brain rot spreads. They develop cellulite, sprout hemorrhoids, hit menopause, buy wigs, dry up, and then, thank God, they finally die. But their daughters continue the she-devil cycle.

Dumb-ass damsels in distress. Dames consider themselves victims, yet they victimize their male counterparts. They become their man's mommy. He's their puppet, and mommy's in control. Mommy pulls that invisible cat-o'-nine-tails out of her panties and pussy-whips her little boy into emotional slavery. She screams out demands at her boyfriend or husband. He





passively obliges, his balls retreating into his sac.

Women are calculating hypocrites. They'll attack a man for being a "sexist pig" while rating his butt, joking about his hair, and measuring his desirability by his savings-account balance. Women scorn men for being insensitive and money-hungry but chastise them if their gifts didn't cost enough. Men shouldn't take it. But while our society has always accepted women belittling men, it never tolerates men abusing women.

Women bitch about equality, but down deep, they still want Mr. Testicles to pay. Clinging to their partner with eyes pleading, their burning desire is to force lover-boy into making that costly purchase. They use guys for jewelry, food, rent, clothes, cars, furniture, career growth, money, flowers, homes, vacations, everything. In return, she gives the man three minutes to ply away at her stinking love mound.

Women believe that they're clean, pure, and godly souls. They appear angelic, but their minds are fuming with full-blast cuntiness. They act meek but have swallowed more loads and licked out more assholes than there are days on the calendar.

They possess a high holy attitude about being women, as if there's something spiritually exalted about owning a uterus. Women think that since they ovulate, bleed every month, and have milk dripping out of their tits, they're special. Human females are baby machines, just like female gerbils, hippos, and vampire bats.

Women have bad taste in music, movies, and IDEAS. I've never met another female who enlightened me. Finally, here's a chick who rejects the concept of "sisterhood" and has the guts to say that other women are boring, unoriginal twats. Career women, lesbians, single mothers, feminists, nuns, punk chicks—WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? Though they march in protest lines, study art in Paris, and go to law school, they inevitably lie down and give birth like the sows that they are. When a chick tells me of her desire for a child, I punch in a wall with my fist. But the next time some bitch tells me this, I'll punch in her ugly face instead.

Women say they're either against abortion or pro-choice. I'm the first woman in history to say that there should be NO choice. If women were truly pro-choice, they'd choose to keep their fat legs shut. But they're just talking shit when they talk about "controlling their bodies," and they want the government (i.e., daddy) to pay for their sloppy one-night stands. Destroy all infants, remove all ovaries, and pay abortionists more than the president!

I was never a bitch and never will be. I'm full of hate on the outside, but inside there's a heart of gold. With most women, it's the other way around. Unlike the others, there's no pose here. Besides having neither a maternal instinct nor vaginal odor, I'm brutally honest. That's a trait other women can't tolerate. When confronted with honesty, they run away screaming. I smile when I'm amused, not to pry something out of a man. I say what I think, not what my girlfriends expect me to say. Why can't they all be like me? Because their genitals breed weakness! A cunt is a cunt is a cunt. Your mother was a cunt, her mother was a cunt, and all your little girls will be cunts. Shave your head, cut off your tits, sew up your crotch, and then give me a call. ■



I HATE MEN



Men rule the earth. They're in charge. They make the important decisions. They're the bosses. They call the shots. They toss the dice and collect the chips. It's a man's world.

That's why the world's so FUCKED UP!!! Hairy balls cover the globe and smother its potential. Men flex their muscles and push us to the brink of disaster. They don't care if the world's in flames as long as they have a beer and a hard-on. What dicks! What SMALL dicks!

Look at my car! Look at my gun! Look at my guitar! Look at the big fish I caught! Look at this fat slab of aluminum siding! PLEASE don't look at my dick!

Men join forces with their "dude" pals, scratch their balls, buy six-packs of beer, and act like douchebags. Guys turn on the boob tube and watch sports. They'll discuss baseball, football, golf, hockey, horse races, and basketball as if it's a matter of life and death. Losers! Most of them would have heart attacks if they got up from the La-Z-Boy.



A man will squeeze his beer-bellied, hairy body into tight Bermuda shorts and stick a finger up his anus, thinking that no one's looking. I must turn my head away. Men bark out catcalls to strange broads in the streets. Their eyes zoom in only on T and A. They don't realize that they're zit-ridden, horny creeps who can't get dates.

Men are ruled by their dicks. They're not so tough in the face of pussy. One stroke of their prick, a quick flash of tit, and they just lose it. Their sweaty nuts send alarms to their pea-sized brains—STICK IT IN! STICK IT IN! Orgasm is the top priority. It doesn't matter what their sex partner looks like. Guys will get off on any cunt. They can put a bag over her head. They'll even fuck an ass, an exhaust pipe, or a toilet-paper tube. All that counts is to aim for that hole.

Guys can connect a VCR, fix a flat tire, lift heavy furniture, and read a map, but they can't find a woman's G spot. Men think that they know how to satisfy a woman. They assume that when they slide on top of her and stick their stinky bratwurst in, she'll be overjoyed. But the penis is so ugly. It looks like an elderly pachyderm. A vibrator and a couple of batteries get the job done quicker and better. Vibrators never talk back. Vibrators don't cheat on you. Vibrators don't insult you. Vibrators are always there for you. Vibrators never wear boxer shorts. Vibrators never get fat. Vibrators don't snore. Vibrators don't belch. Vibrators don't fart in your face. Vibrators don't have hair on their back. Vibrators don't have ugly toenails and lumpy feet. Vibrators don't watch *Monday Night Football*. Vibrators never go limp at the crucial moment. If the batteries start to go, just wax up your dildo and let the good times roll. Plant your foot in your boyfriend's ass and kick him out



onto the street. He's just another petty laborer displaced by technology.

Little boys. They act like warriors at the office, but when they get home, they need someone to wipe their mouths and spoon-feed them. Men need their wives' permission and approval. Women control the money, buy the clothes, and tell men what to do. Men listen and accept. They need women to cook their meals for them, pick up after them, and service them sexually. When they're alone with their wives, they become timid, passive, obedient babies. There's nothing wimpier than a male who loves his mother, craves children, and obeys his wife. When a man says, "Yes, dear," he reveals himself as the submissive peon nature intended him to be.

Men are immature clowns. They get very angry when their passions are denied. If they don't get their way, they throw temper



tantrums. Objects get broken. They beat each other up, rape, steal, and murder. Then they go to jail and become housewives.

They gullibly swallow society's pressure to be breadwinners. They get sick over it. Guys are dying to make a name for themselves which will live in perpetuity. They fantasize about having lots of money and sexy young groupies standing in line to suck their cock. They dream about their golden retirement years but work their way into an early grave. Fools!

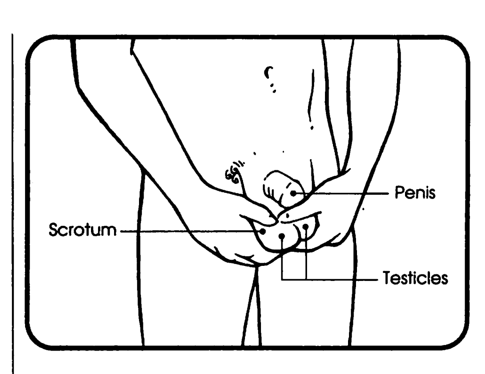
Men are bullshit artists. In their blind drive to compete, they pile one lie atop the next. Like Ralph Kramden, their minds are clouded with get-rich-quick schemes. Woefully inadequate, they suffer from delusions of grandeur. They brag about how much money they make, how



talented they are, how many fights they've won, and how big their schween is. All exaggerations. *Especially* the last one.

Men aren't as smart as they think. They're cave men with underdeveloped minds. Their test scores are consistently lower than those of women. If women were granted equal access to power, men would be as useless as yesterday's coffee grinds. If men's true fears were revealed, the world would erupt into laughter.

Men aren't as strong as they think. One swift kick to the nuts and they're down on their knees, reduced to blubbering idiots. Women live eight years longer than men because they're STRONGER.



Do you know what I'm going to do for you, you stupid lug? Throw your clothes in the hamper? Wash your underwear? Scrub the floors? Balance your checkbook? Laugh at your lame jokes? Make excuses for your boorish behavior? Suck your cock so you can roll over, fall asleep, and ignore my needs? No—I have a SPECIAL little love treat in store for you. Look at my new chain saw! I'm going to slice off your member with it. I'm going to hold your pink little thing, the size of a chewed stick of bubble gum, and laugh at you. First, I'm going to tease you and take a few hacks at the surface, remove a few divots from your ding-dong. As you scream and beg and whimper and plead and finally realize what it feels like to be a woman in this society, I'll show no mercy. I'll plunge down to the stump and leave you bleeding like a broken pipeline. I'll take your miniature specimen and place it in a Ziploc bag to be kept with my others. One less man. One less headache. ■

Postscript: I'd like to add that NONE of this applies to my charming, talented, handsome husband, who far exceeds other men in every way possible. With a man of his stature, no appliances are necessary!



You don't shock me. I shudder with boredom at everything you do, from tattooing your dick to chewing on your own poop. Not only have I seen all of your weak gestures before, I've seen them done better.

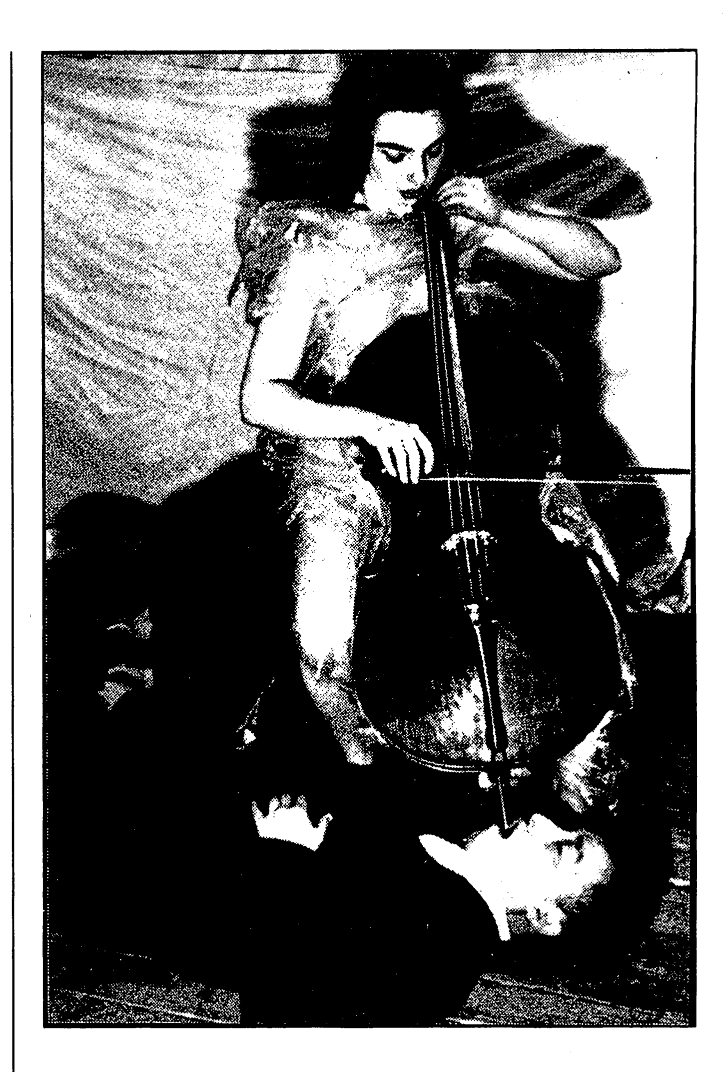
You remind me of someone I knew in college. His name was Mark. Pale, unshaven, and wearing his dishwater-colored hair in a Mohawk, Mark was an anarchist. He railed against the corporate elite and cheered for the collective. Projecting himself as his own mascot, he defaced hundreds of buildings with a goofy cartoon drawing of a Mohawk-wearing anarchist. The back of his leather jacket had an anarchy 'A' crudely daubed in white paint. Mark could be seen around town clustered with similarly disaffected youth, drinking out of paper bags, committing petty acts of vandalism, and plotting America's overthrow.

Unfortunately, Mark's parents were publishing magnates who had tucked away forty thousand dollars in stock for their baby anarchist. I once watched Mark transform into a sobbing bitch when he lost a bootleg cassette of his favorite hardcore band. Despite his lowlife appearance, he was a rich boy with the time and money to act poor. So were all of his friends. So are all of the people who consider themselves "alternative." Mark—you remind me of him.

Like Mark, your underground is strictly an upper-class phenom. You're a body-pierced, hair-dyeing, chain-smoking, whip-carrying **FAKE**, a little bitchy snitch who hasn't been hit enough. Your black eyeliner, rubber pants, and asymmetrical hairdo are a post-pubescent way of playing costume. You can't handle the guilt of your comfortable background, so you commit the heinous crime of slumming. No one worships trash in the slums, where they have to eat and breathe it daily. In poor neighborhoods, weirdness invites violence. Yet a blue-blooded nabob like you acts triflingly eccentric and considers it radical.

The "creative community" doesn't consist of the most creative people; you're the ones with the most *spare time* to create, those whose parents tolerate—and often finance—your flighty pursuits. What usually passes for art is just the idle noodling of the leisure class.





Your gizzard ululates with, "You sellout!" Well, the wealthy are the only ones who can afford *not* to sell out. Yes, there are a holy few who have refused cash when it's been dangled in front of them—they're called *masochists.* If you're still reading this, you're a masochist, too. By the time I'm done with you, you'll reconsider your opposition to law enforcement.

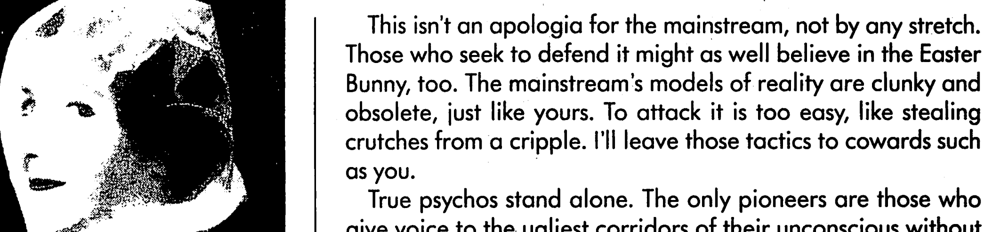
In your typically egocentric way, you pretend you're the vanguard, freeing the oppressed from the shackles of ignorance. You conduct a sorry crusade to recast the world in your image. You're dumb enough to think you'll make a difference. You feel that if everyone was like you, society would be wonderful. Yet you walk away scratching your head when the truly oppressed don't want anything to do with you. You've never fought for anything but the right to be infantile.

If patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels, political rhetoric is a cubbyhole for dullards. The political is merely the personal in a cheap, quivering act of sublimation. You oppose power, which is like protesting the sun—scream all you want, but it'll still scorch you. As you cry about global warming, global corporations, and global revolution, I stare into the vacant globes of your eyes. The only anarchy going on is the mutinous misfiring of your brain cells. The 'A' stands for "asshole."

the undergrounc

is





You whine about your "sexuality," how your body is a political combat zone. You're a simple rodent with boring bodily functions which you seek to ennoble. With your flagrant vanity and dishonesty in personal interactions, you reveal yourself to be equally as rotten as the leaders you despise. You invariably wind up imitating the oppressor. Unfortunately, you weren't oppressed to begin with.

For not only are you a liar, you're a hypocrite. You're fascinated by violence until you're confronted with it. You romanticize trauma but have never been traumatized. You demand grant money from a government you seek to destroy. You idolize primitive cultures but would slash your wrists if your CD player broke. You condemn religion but consider yourself enlightened. You're as self-righteous as the moralists upon which you spit. You hate hatred, won't tolerate intolerance, and conspire with others against conformity.

All your cohorts are hypocrites, too. Feminists don't degrade, objectify, and stereotype men? Socialists aren't elitists? Environmentalists don't drive cars? A pox upon all your houses. I'd wish for a rat to bite your ass and give you the Black Plague, but you'd probably consider it a fashion statement.

While you slurp the dick of political correctness, your amber asshole is being torn asunder by aesthetic correctness. You flush your self-respect down the toilet while scrambling to obey the edicts of boho taste. You're frightened senseless that others will think you're uncool. You'd rather swallow whale sperm than admit you like disco, Chicken McNuggets, or *Love Connection.* You're frozen with fear that someone will realize what little you have to say. You squirm in the face of your own dullness. You are a prisoner of the underground, a hostage of your own creative retardation. Ideas emerge from your head stillborn.

Your rebelliousness is laid out for you like the portions of a TV dinner. You ape the powers that be with every clove-scented breath you take. You are nothing more than socioeconomic ectoplasm, a target market, a file folder at Central Casting. You exist as a parasite, because without an Establishment for you to oppose, you'd shrivel into cellular waste. Try as you may to avoid being absorbed by the mainstream, you remain trapped under its microscope, an amoeba with a nose ring.

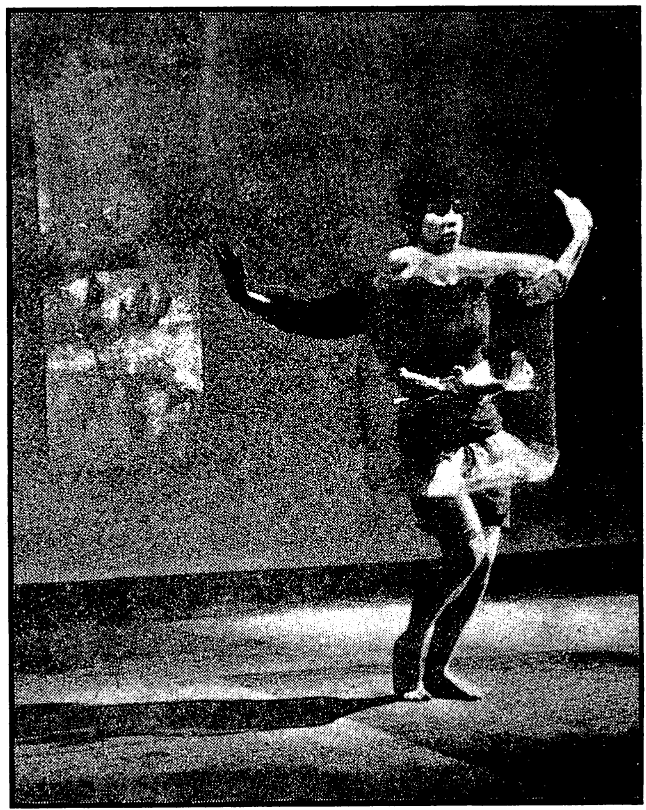


This isn't an apologia for the mainstream, not by any stretch. Those who seek to defend it might as well believe in the Easter Bunny, too. The mainstream's models of reality are clunky and obsolete, just like yours. To attack it is too easy, like stealing crutches from a cripple. I'll leave those tactics to cowards such as you.

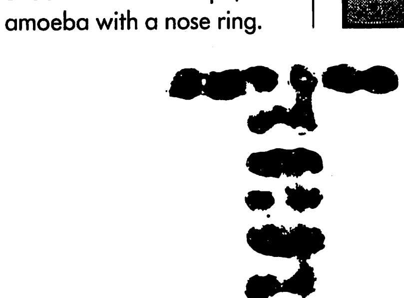
True psychos stand alone. The only pioneers are those who give voice to the ugliest corridors of their unconscious without fear of censure from any quarter. The acts that ordinary people commit behind closed doors are beyond the ken of any performance artist. Humans' innate weirdness is far more threatening and entertaining than anything the professional shock mavens could conjure.

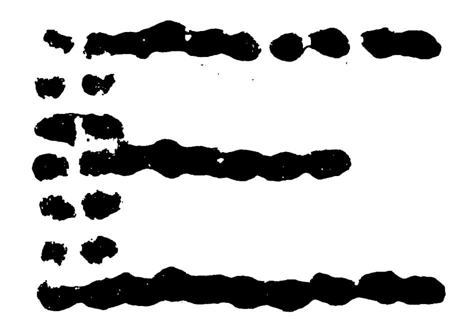
I boggle your conception of a world split between cognoscenti and squares. I subvert the subversives and bury the underground under six feet of its own hypocritical manure. I perform *unsolicited* tattooing, body-piercing, and ritual scarification upon you.

Give vent to your sickest fantasies, but don't call it art. Cornhole Barbara Bush, but only if you *want* to. Sketch your astrological chart with your own feces, but only if it *feels* good. If you want to do something truly radical, kill yourself. We'll have one less reader, but the world will be a better place. ■

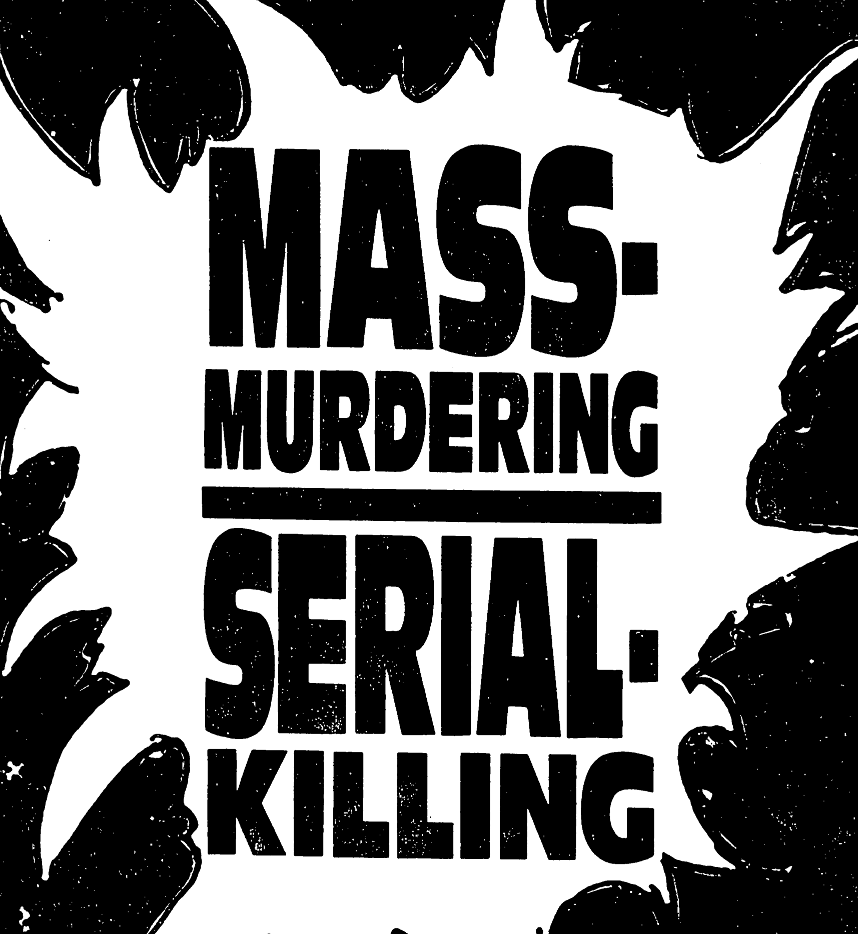








Night of a Hundred



Stars

Greater love hath no man than to snuff another's life. What more intimate act, what grander display of passion is there than murder? What bigger influence can you have on someone's life than to end it, to erase them from the ontological chalkboard? Can you imagine a higher moral calling than to destroy someone's dreams with one bullet, a blade's swipe, or a pair of thumbs to the throat? Nothing is more thrilling than to act as judge, jury, and executioner, to sever the spirit from the stinking fleshly shell. Killers are exterminating angels, some of the sweetest souls who ever lived. They are the Beautiful People.

Who among us has not secretly desired to kill? Murder is the ultimate aphrodisiac, an icebreaker at parties. To kill is to be fully alive, conquering, dominant. Wake up and smell the carcass.

Murder makes the world go 'round. We *need* murder. Mathematicians estimate that if current birthrates continue, in a thousand years each human on earth will have less than a square *inch* of space. Birth is more harmful to the planet than death. Given this scenario, sex could be seen as more evil than murder, and TV programmers would have been right all along. In more enlightened times, killers would be called "postnatal abortionists," "anti-lifers," or "overpopulation police."

Serial killers and mass murderers intrigue us through the seemingly random nature of their slayings. We expect politicians and gangsters to kill, as it's been their stock in trade for thousands of years. We'd be very disappointed if they *didn't* kill. We might even cry. But you won't see Al Capone or Adolf Hitler on this list. Their motive was obvious: POWER. For this article, we operate by one maxim: "The lesser the motive, the better the murder."

We mostly stick to killers who have been identified and convicted, although the Zodiac Killer and Jack the Stripper were too interesting to pass by. We also tried to keep it somewhat current. Somehow, a Romanian baron who killed hundreds of peasants in the fifteenth century doesn't have the same impact as the guy who axe-murdered four women near your local Burger King ten days ago.

To make our honor roll, a killer had to have claimed at least four lives, the rough equivalent of an American family. (Team murderers are considered one killing unit.) Therefore, some classic slayers are missing from the list: Gary Gilmore, Joseph Kallinger, and Gary Heidnik, among others. However, Ed Gein, who was only proven to have murdered two women, was irresistible. Excepting Gein, all others were required to meet our quota. We have our *standards*, after all! Yet most of our Hot One Hundred were chosen for their *creativity*. That's why killer-of-four Jerry Brudos, who fetishized dead feet and made molds of his victims' breasts, made the list, while Gerald Eugene Stano, who routinely slaughtered forty-one prostitutes, didn't.

For those unaware of the distinction between mass murderers and serial killers, here's the simplest definition: Mass murderers take a lot out at once, while serial killers take a lot out, but one at a time. Though serial killers outnumber mass murderers on this list by a three-to-one margin, there's something tantalizing about the latter's single eruption, that last-straw frustration culminating in one mighty thunderclap. Mass murderers go out blazing, wreaking vengeance for real or imagined slights in what is probably their piddling lives' first assertive act.

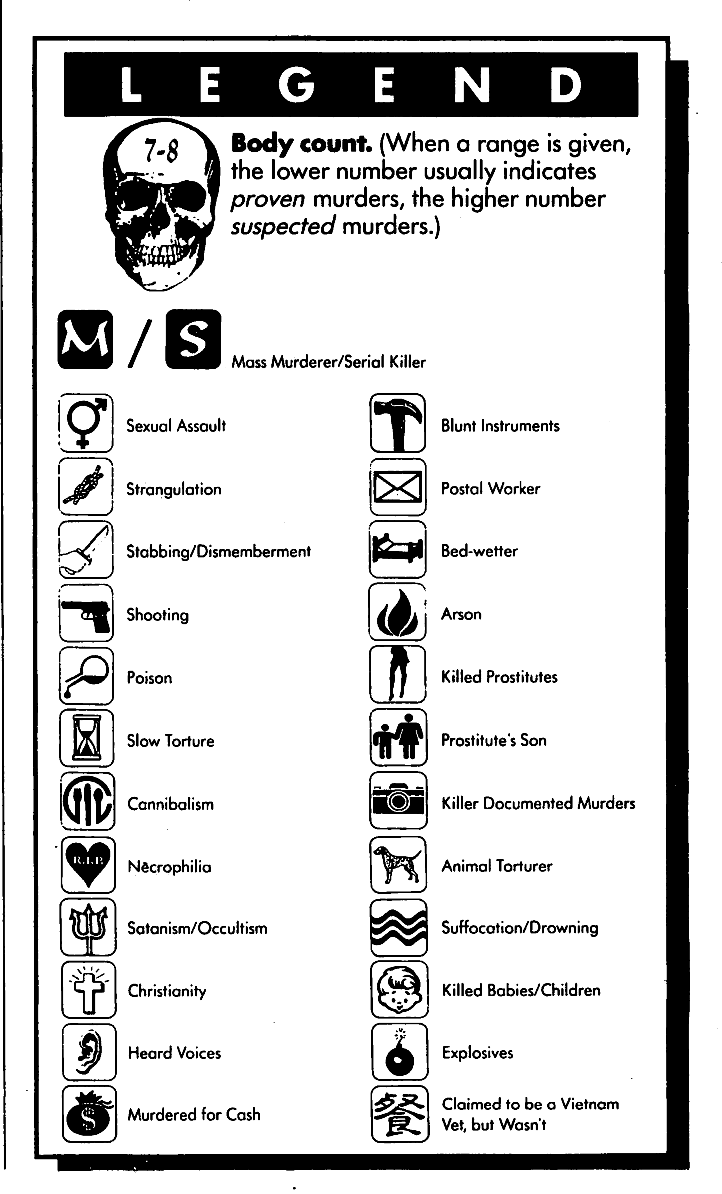
Serial killers, on the other hand, are less extroverted, stealthier, smart enough to cover their tracks. For them, murder has become an appetite, possibly superseding the hunger for food and sex. They are serotonin-sapped bogeymen writing personal gospels on their apartment walls. The best thing about serial killers is that they're *out there* somewhere, dozens of them still undetected as you read this.

Since students of murder are as obsessive about their hobby's ephemera as any sports fanatic, we expect to get letters claiming we've bungled the facts. In our defense, we used multiple sources for each killer's synopsis. However, the available data is maddeningly contradictory. When posting facts and statistics, we used what seemed to be the most reliable source in each case. Unfortunately, we weren't there to witness the murders, so we couldn't tell for sure whose data was correct. You weren't there, either, so shut your mouth.

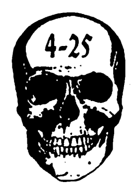
What follows is the *crème de la* killing, the Academy Awards of murder. But it's not intended to be the last word: If you know of "better" killers, God bless ya. By the time this is printed, some monster will come along who'll make these people look like Walt Disney. Let's hope so. Instead of being definitive, this list is more like a Whitman's Sampler. As with a selection of chocolates, there are some you'll savor, some you'll nibble at and throw away, and some you'll avoid altogether. To be fair, they might not like *you*, either.

Murder is less of a threat than cigarette smoking, arterial plaque, industrial toxins, or driving a car. Yet people shy away from murder as if there's something *wrong* with it. When you read the following accounts, you'll find it nearly impossible to deny these killers their charm and quotability. Oblivious to fanciful moralistic constructs, they have the guts to take matters into their own hands. Are they disturbed? Perhaps, but that's a word we consider synonymous with 'visionary.' Some would say that we've stepped over the line and are glorifying them. Of *course* we are.

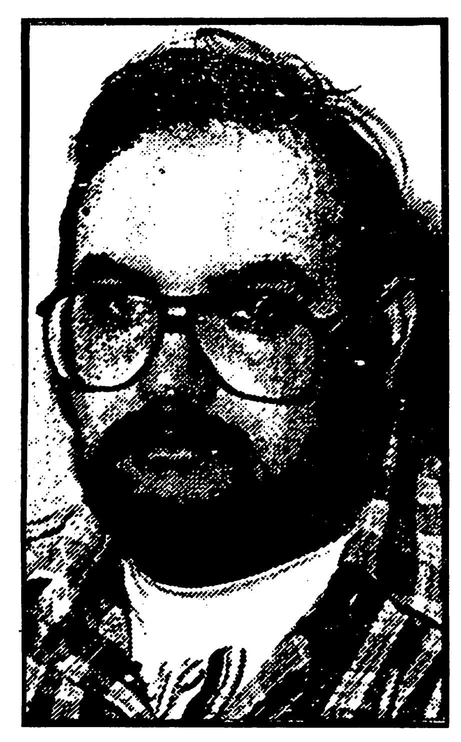
And Goad said, "Let there be death!"



★ 1 ★
RICHARD ANGELO
"The Angel of Death"



A doughy, bearded male nurse who worked the night shift at Long Island's Good Samaritan Hospital, Angelo's colleagues marveled at the skill with which he revived elderly patients who had gone into cardiac arrest. Sure, this heroic Eagle Scout and former altar boy let a few of his charges slip away, but that's because there was an abnormally high number of emergencies on his shift—hey, wait a minute!



In October, 1987, a patient complained that Angelo slipped an unsolicited drug into his intravenous bottle and told him, "I'm going to make you feel better." Within minutes, the patient started gasping for breath but was able to flag down another nurse, who saved him. Investigators found hypodermic needles and a vial of muscle paralyzer in Richie's locker. Angelo said he stole the pharmaceuticals "to experiment on field mice." Turns out he habitually injected the infirm with the muscle paralyzer, split, and rushed back to the scene, valiantly seeming the hero. One person compared him to a fireman who doubles as an arsonist. This flabby angel was suspected in up to twenty-five deaths, but he was pinned on four murders and given fifty years in the slammer.

QUOTED (in a written statement to police): "The reason I injected Mr. Kucich with the drug was the unit was very busy lately, and I felt very inadequate in general. I had to prove myself to the staff and to myself."

CHARACTER WITNESS (Angelo's landlord): "He was like the guy next door. He was a quiet person who kept to himself. He was a good tenant, not one of those rowdy types."





★ 2 ★
JOE BALL



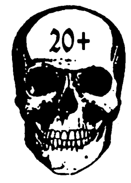
Visitors to The Sociable Inn, Joe Ball's roadside Texas honky-tonk, found a saucy mélange of free-flowing whisky, busty waitresses, and a pit containing five live alligators. A swinging former bootlegger, Joe amused his guests in the mid-to-late 1930s by throwing live cats and dogs into the gator pit and cheering as the hapless house pets were ripped to shreds. Now *that's* entertainment! Joe had no trouble making money, but he just couldn't find good help—his waitresses seemed to disappear as soon as they started working for him. One night, a local cowpoke chanced upon Ball feeding human body parts to the hungry reptiles. Ball gave him a lump of hush money. Joe's third wife fled the state after Ball told her what was in the gators' high-protein diet. Texas police, fearing Mrs. Ball had been murdered, dropped by The Sociable Inn to question Joe, who whipped out a gun and snuffed himself. The San Antonio Zoo was the lucky recipient of the orphaned alligators. Police estimated that Ball murdered seven waitresses, five of whom became pet food.

QUOTED (when asked about the high turnover rate of his waitresses): "You know how they are; they come and go."






★ 3 ★
MARTHA BECK & RAYMOND FERNANDEZ
"The Lonely Hearts Killers"



Ray Fernandez was a skinny, wig-wearing Latin lover described by the press as "a rather seedy Charles Boyer." He incurred brain damage as a result of a boating accident and came to believe that he had psychic powers which forced women to fall in love with him. Responding to an ad in a "Lonely Hearts" magazine, he worked his unctuous charm on Martha Beck, a two-hundred-eighty-pound Florida nurse with a raging appetite for both cookies and nooky. After a steamy courtship, they decided in the late 1940s to finance their romance by swindling other unsuspecting lonely hearts. Ray answered the ads, sweeping his prey off their feet with promises of tropical love. He'd then introduce them to his "sister," Martha, who often acted as the witness at their hastily arranged marriages.

Shortly after the sacred vows were recited, Martha and Ray murdered the new family member and stripped her of all valuables. The doomed spouses were mainly poisoned, but Martha was known to swing a hammer on occasion, and Ray claimed to have given a Mrs. Myrtle Young a heart attack during a forced sex marathon. They buried their last victims, Delphine Downing and her twenty-month-old daughter, in fresh concrete in the basement of Downing's Grand Rapids, Michigan, home. Police were called to the scene by suspicious neighbors while the cement was still wet. Since Michigan had no death penalty, Ray and Martha were transferred to New York, where they were sentenced to die for the murder of a sixty-six-year-old widow. In jail, their cells were positioned so they could see one another, and the lovebirds were known to blow kisses and write notes back and forth. They declared undying affection until the very end. After Ray had fried, Martha plopped her polyunsaturated bulk into the electric chair, grinning serenely.



Martha Beck: fat, horny, and deadly.

QUOTED (Ray's last official words): "I want to shout it out. I love Martha. What do [sic] the public know about love?"

QUOTED (Martha's last words to the press): "My story is a love story. But only those tortured by love can know what I mean.... Imprisonment in the Death House has only strengthened my feeling for Raymond."








★ 4 ★
THE BENDER FAMILY
"The Bloody Benders"



Proof positive that the family that slays together stays together. The Benders—Ma, Pa, an oafish son, and the seductive Kate—operated an inn and general store from their cabin in Southeastern Kansas during the early 1870s. A canvas tarpaulin was suspended down the cabin's middle, separating the Benders' bedroom from the rest of the inn. Kate,

a bosomy faith healer and psychic channeler, traveled the county with a spiritualist revue. She lured audience members home to the inn, placed them at the end of a table with the back of their heads nearly touching the canvas tarp, and entertained them over dinner. As the unwitting lodger chomped at his food and listened to Kate's otherworldly babble, one of the Bender boys would clunk him in the head with a sledgehammer from behind the curtain. The bludgeoned corpse was then picked clean of belongings and dumped through a trapdoor leading to the Benders' cellar. The body was later buried nearby. The enterprise ended when a victim's brother inquired about his bro's whereabouts. The Benders fled with ten grand and were never found. A posse discovered eleven unmarked graves next to the Benders' cabin.









★ 5 ★ DAVID BERKOWITZ "Son of Sam"



From July, 1976, until August, 1977, this smiling, wool-haired, nice Jewish boy terrified the Big Apple with his nighttime attacks on couples, whom he blasted as they sat necking in cars. Using a .44 Bulldog revolver, Berkowitz mainly stalked New York City's lovers' lanes, killing six and wounding seven more. He shattered one woman's skull on a Queens sidewalk, firing a bullet through her college textbook as she guarded her face with it. In April of 1977, after murdering a Bronx couple, he dropped a letter near the crime scene. It was addressed to police and read, in part, "I am deeply hurt by your calling me a weman-hater [sic]. I am not. But I am a monster. I am the Son of Sam. I am a little brat. . . . I love to hunt. Prowling the streets looking for fair game—tasty meat." This talented writer continued to boast of his exploits in letters to the New York *Daily News.*

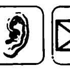
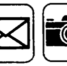
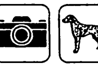
He wounded a Queens couple in June and struck again in July, killing a girl and blinding her boyfriend as they sat in their car on a dimly lit Brooklyn street. Berkowitz had been careless enough to park his vehicle in front of a fire hydrant, and police later traced a parking ticket to Dave's Yonkers apartment. They apprehended him without a struggle, and not a moment too soon, for he was planning to visit a disco the next night with a machine gun, telling cops they would have spent "all summer counting the bodies."

Berkowitz lived on a bare mattress under a naked light bulb in an apartment strewn with empty booze bottles. With a flair for self-dramatization matched perhaps only by Manson, he had scrawled "IN THIS HOLE LIVES THE WICKED KING," "KILL FOR MY MASTER," and "I TURN CHILDREN INTO KILLERS" on his empty walls. Some have suggested that he acted in tandem with other Satanists. "Sam" was his neighbor Sam Carr, whose black Labrador's incessant barking kept Berkowitz awake at night. Dave sent several nasty letters to Carr and once shot the dog but failed to kill it. The dreaded Son of Sam, a nebbishlike former postal worker, told authorities that demons commanded him to kill and that he achieved a "mental orgasm" after murdering. He was sentenced to three hundred and sixty-five years' imprisonment. He now counsels other inmates and collects religious books in his modest Catskills jail cell.



QUOTED (in a letter sent to *Daily News* columnist Jimmy Breslin): "Hello from the gutters of N.Y.C. which are filled with dog manure, vomit, stale wine, urine, and blood. Hello from the sewers of N.Y.C. which swallow up these delicacies when they are washed away by the sweeper trucks. Hello from the cracks in the sidewalks of N.Y.C. and from the ants that dwell in these cracks and feed on the dried blood of the dead that has settled into the cracks."



★ 6 ★ KENNETH BIANCHI & ANGELO BUONO "The Hillside Stranglers"



Ken Bianchi was just an average guy, a sensitive, hard-working father and security guard who liked to jerk off into rabbit pelts. So what if his mom used to savagely spank him for being a bed-wetter and once held his hand over an open flame, forcing him to say he loved her? Who *cares* that he once forged psychiatric credentials and opened his own counseling service? He was swarthily handsome and loved by all who knew him.

His older cousin Angie Buono, though, was more sinister, a beady-eyed auto upholsterer and part-time pimp. In L.A. during the late seventies, porn addict Angie drew Ken into the lurid realm of the Hollywood sex industry. Together they cruised for prostitutes and committed their first murder just to see how it felt. They took all but one of their prey to Angie's home, where victims were bound, raped, penetrated with foreign objects, and choked to death. The killer cousins tortured one girl with an electrical cord. They injected another with cleaning fluid and then placed a bag tightly over her head. The bag fed into a hose leading to the stove, where Angie turned on the gas. Bianchi and Buono dumped many of the corpses on Los Angeles hillsides, spreading the victims' legs open as if awaiting intercourse.



Bianchi: your typical jerkoff.

When Ken moved to Bellingham, Washington, the Hillside Stranglings mysteriously ceased. He was arrested a year later for the strangulation murders of two Bellingham girls and was finally linked to the L.A. killings. Under hypnosis, he unleashed what seemed to be a violent alter ego named "Steve Walker," a macho killer who despised the strait-laced Ken. A videotape of Bianchi as "Steve" was shown on television and convinced many that Ken suffered from multiple personalities. His insanity plea fell apart when it was discovered that "Steve" was actually Thomas Steven Walker, owner of some college transcripts which Bianchi had stolen. Bianchi got twenty-seven years to life, and Buono was sentenced to life without the

possibility of parole. Angie was later married in a heartwarming ceremony at Folsom Prison.



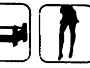
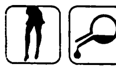
Buono: a sinister elfin sadist.

QUOTED (Bianchi as Steve Walker): "It wasn't fuckin' wrong! Why is it wrong to get rid of some fuckin' cunts?"

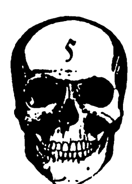
CHARACTER WITNESS (Buono's friend): "He wouldn't hurt a canary bird."



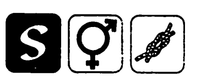



★ 7 ★ WAYNE BODEN "The Vampire Rapist"



This nattily attired Montrealer practiced lethal "rough sex" before Robert "Preppie Murderer" Chambers had pubic hair. From 1968 to 1971, he enticed gullible Canadian women with the idea that mild strangulation could spice up their love lives. He left the same evidence in each of his five rape-slayings: bite marks on the victim's breasts and a radiant expression on her face. Most victims showed no signs of a violent struggle. They apparently enjoyed Boden's kinkiness so much, they didn't realize he was killing them. An orthodontist matched teeth marks found on a victim to Boden's choppers, and Wayne was handed four life sentences. It is not known if he became the Vampire Buttfucker while in jail.



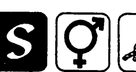
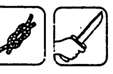
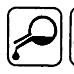
★ 8 ★ WILLIAM BONIN "The Freeway Killer"



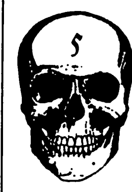
Vietnam vet Bill Bonin liked to murder young boys on Friday and Saturday nights so he had free time to take his girlfriend roller-skating on Sundays. Driving a green van, he crept along roads in L.A. and Orange County from 1979 to 1980, picking up teenaged males, strangling or stabbing them, and dumping their nude cadavers on the highway shoulder. This heartless bastard even killed a boy who was hitchhiking to Disneyland! Bonin often strangled his victims with their own T-shirts, spinning a tire iron around the garment in a deadly tourniquet. He jammed an ice pick into one poor soul's ear after forcing him to drink chlorohydrate acid. He cut off a victim's genitals and placed them two feet from the corpse. The aptly named Vernon Butts, an accomplice in at least five of the robbery-killings, once stuffed a coat hanger up a victim's ass. Ouch! Bonin kept news clippings about the murders in his glove compartment and stupidly told others that he was the Freeway Killer.

Vernon Butts hanged himself while in jail. Judge William Keene, who would later star as *The Judge* on the daytime courtroom TV series, presided over Bonin's trial and spat out his disgust for the sadistic sex killer. A prosecutor described Bonin as having an "insatiable appetite" for murder. Bonin received the death sentence. The US Supreme Court rejected his appeal, so it's only a matter of time before he gets the gas.

QUOTED (to accomplice Gregory Miley after snuffing one victim): "I'm horny—I need another one."


★ 9 ★ IAN BRADY & MYRA HINDLEY "The Moors Murderers"



An illegitimate punk from Glasgow's slums, Ian Brady met bird-faced Myra Hindley at a chemical company where both worked. The crazy, love-struck kids formed an after-hours friendship steeped in hardcore porn, the writings of de Sade, and Nazi philosophy. Hindley was considered a normal, sexually repressed British girl, but soon after she met Brady, her panties dropped and she was eagerly posing for explicit photos.



Brady: sullen porno Nazi.

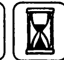
Their first victim was sixteen-year-old Pauline Reade, whom they buried on Saddleworth Moor in 1963. Reade's body wasn't found until twenty-four years later. Little John Kilbride, twelve, was the next to be launched into eternity by the deadly duo, but not before Brady and Hindley snapped some commemorative photos. Ian and Myra slept on Kilbride's grave on Christmas Eve, 1964. Keith Bennett, twelve, met much the same fate, as did Lesley Ann Downey, ten. Not only did the killer couple shoot photos of Lesley Ann, they tape-recorded the dying bumpkin's desperate pleas for mercy.



Hindley: birdlike child-torturer.

After the fourth murder, Brady was feeling a bit full of himself. He bragged of his achievements to David Smith, Hindley's teenaged brother-in-law. Brady picked up young homosexual Edward Evans in a bar, brought him home, sat him on a sofa, and crushed his head with an axe while Smith watched. Brady then poured glasses of wine for himself and the dumbfounded Smith. Evans had kicked Brady during the struggle, so Ian decided to spite him by not burying his body for a full day. Smith later notified police, and the mod

murderers were given life sentences.

★ 10 ★ CARL BROWN



Brown, a fifty-one-year-old former teacher, strolled into a Miami machine shop during the summer of 1982 wearing a straw hat and carrying his Mossberg 500 "Persuader." He smoked eight humans, walked out the back door, and lackadaisically pedaled away on his bicycle. Two observers gave chase in a car, shot Brown, and finished him off by slamming their vehicle into him. It all seems like a senseless waste of human life, but Brown had his reasons. He had taken his lawn mower into the shop for some welding work. They fixed the mower according to his specifications, but they handed him a bill for *twenty dollars*! Would *you* have let them get away with it?

CHARACTER WITNESS: A neighbor described Brown as "quiet and eccentric."



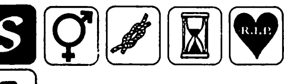
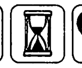
★ 11 ★ JERRY BRUDOS "The Lust Killer"



Brudos was arrested at age seventeen for capturing a woman and making her strip while he took pictures. Sentenced to nine months in the loony bin, he told a counselor that he often thought about refrigerating dead women so he could twist their pliant bodies into erotic positions. Despite the fact that such a confession screamed NUT JOB, the authorities released him, and Jerry went on to fulfill his dreams. He married and demanded that his wife never wear clothes around the house. Jerry would sometimes don the little lady's undergarments himself, but clothes on the wife were *verboten*.

His first murder victim was nineteen-year-old Linda Slawson, a door-to-door encyclopedia saleswoman. After inviting her in, Brudos crushed Slawson's skull with a wooden plank, then severed her foot and kept it in a freezer. He was wont to slip a really nice shoe on it from time to time. He strangled his second victim, fucked the corpse, severed one of her tits, and made an epoxy mold of it. The third girl lost both breasts. The fourth went home with Jerry after meeting him in a mall and was strangled, zapped with electricity, and possibly jabbed with needles. Brudos suspended his victims on a garage meat hook and played with them after death, often dressing them and snapping pictures. He placed mirrors above his victims so he could admire them from different angles. All four murders took place in the Portland, Oregon, area from 1968 to 1969. Police eventually traced the killings to Brudos, who received four life sentences. The former electronics technician now happily taps away on a personal computer in prison.

QUOTED (to Linda Slawson): "I'm really interested in buying encyclopedias."

★ 12 ★ DAVID BULLOCK "The Happy Murderer"

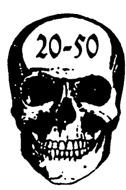


A thrill killer of the highest order, this male hustler said murder gave him an "emotional high." Over a month during the New York winter of '81-'82, he shot six people to death, rousing some from slumber before killing them so he could watch their horrified expressions. His murders were apparently unprovoked, and he knew more than a few of his victims. One was his roommate, whose body was dumped into the Harlem River. He killed an actor who was starring in "Babes in Toyland" and an investment banker who had paid Bullock for sex. Describing the latter killing, Dave said, "I just put the pillow over his head and shot him.... No particular reason, something to amuse myself." He readily confessed to police in a ninety-minute videotape and laughed as he recalled the details in court. The judge didn't share Bullock's sense of mirth and gave the former bicycle thief life in prison.

QUOTED (describing a murder which occurred when he returned to a man's apartment after a Christmas party and became annoyed when the man began fussing over a Christmas tree): "It was in the Christmas spirit. It makes me happy."

★ 13 ★ TED BUNDY



An enigmatic superstar murderer with Ken-doll looks who killed well-heeled, WASPish women that reminded him of a former fiancée. A law student and member of the Young Republicans, Ted was an easy-going smoothie with disarming wit. Superficially, he didn't fit the one-eyed, ogrelike serial-killer stereotype, but he was actually an illegitimate, social-climbing poor boy. Raised in his early years by a violent grandfather in rural Vermont, Bundy made a career of murdering the cheerleader types of which he felt unworthy.

Ted's trail of destruction started around 1974 in the Seattle area, where he had worked as a suicide-hotline counselor and, ironically, written an anti-rape manual. Like Kenneth Bianchi, he posed at one point as a therapist. Bundy cruised malls, college campuses, and other seemingly safe places, frequently wearing his arm in a sling to appear vulnerable. He introduced himself as Ted and sheepishly requested that the woman help him carry groceries to his car. He typically raped his victims first, then bludgeoned or choked them to death. He sodomized some, used foreign objects on others, and was said to have given one girl a shampoo and make-over after she died. He bit some of his victims and told an arresting officer, "Sometimes I feel like a vampire." He disposed of his prey in remote wooded areas, leaving some to decompose and never be recovered. The voyeuristic former Boy Scout and full-time alcoholic was twice suspected by Seattle police, only to have his name cleared both times.



Ted before...

When Ted moved from Seattle to study law in Salt Lake City, the murders moved with him. He was arrested by Utah cops in August, 1975. Hair samples found in his car matched those of a murder victim. It seemed that Ted Bundy's killing career had ended. He was transferred to a Colorado jail on suspicion of murders in that state and continued to study law while incarcerated. He was a model prisoner who insisted that he was framed. Ted was allowed special privileges such as access to health food and use of the law library. He escaped through a library window, was captured, and continued to defend himself in court until he escaped again.

Bundy hightailed it to Florida, where he continued to kill until his arrest in February, 1978. He received the death penalty for the murders of two sorority sisters and a twelve-year-old girl. Throughout the long appeals process, Ted glibly speculated about his murders without actually confessing to them. He finally sizzled in January, 1989, much to the delight of bloodthirsty Floridians.

In various interviews, Bundy admitted that murder gave him a near-sexual release of tension but left him feeling depressed. He spoke of a malignant "inner entity" which compelled him to kill. Near the end, he blamed it all on the influence of hardcore pornography. A plodding TV-movie, *The Deliberate Stranger*, was based on Ted's story, starring that wooden nudnik Mark Harmon in one of the worst miscasts of all time.



. . . and after.

QUOTED: "Killers are very rational people. The more people they kill, the better they get at disposing of bodies. . . . You only find the bodies that a serial killer wants you to find. There's plenty more you'll never find. . . . I don't feel guilty for anything. . . . I feel sorry for people who feel guilt. . . . I'm the coldest motherfucker you'll ever put your eyes on."



★ 14 ★ REG CHRISTIE "The Monster of Rillington Place"



Described as a "shy killer," Christie's a classic example of sexual inadequacy gone awry. Peers had teased him in his teens, calling him "Reggie No-Dick" in reference to his alleged shortcomings. A member of Britain's War Reserve Police, Christie was known as a tattletale who was anal about other officers' minor infractions.

Through the 1940s and '50s, he killed five prostitutes, his wife, plus a woman and her child who lived in his apartment dwelling. He buried six of his victims in and around the building, pausing before burial to snip away their bushy pubes for safekeeping.

Christie couldn't have sex with a woman while she was conscious. He would bring a prostitute home, get her drunk, then make her inhale coal gas on the pretense of it being a cure for asthma or a cold. After she passed out, he would rape and strangle her, sometimes simultaneously.

He grew more careless with each murder. He killed a woman who lived above him by posing as an abortionist, then murdered her fourteen-month-old daughter. The woman's cretinous husband initially confessed to the murders in a bout of confusion, but he later blamed Christie, who took the big swing in 1953.



Christie's pubic-hair collection.

QUOTED (describing his state of mind after raping and strangling a woman): "Once again I experienced that quiet, peaceful thrill. I had no regrets."



★ 15 ★ DOUGLAS DANIEL CLARK ("The Sunset Strip Slayer") & CAROL BUNDY



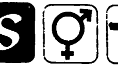
Carol Bundy met Doug Clark while working at a soap factory in the San Fernando Valley and became "virtually mesmerized" by Doug's domineering manner. They soon shacked up together, but Clark failed to abandon his habit of trolling Sunset Boulevard for hookers. He told Carol that he liked to screw freshly killed girls. It seemed a little odd, but she *loved* him, so it was OK. At home, Carol took pictures while Doug received blow jobs from prostitutes. If a girl was especially slutty or gave Doug sloppy lip service, he shot her in the skull while coming in her mouth. Most of his victims were very young, from their mid-teens down to eleven years old. As a stinky sort of hunting trophy, Doug collected his prey's panties. He also decapitated more than one of his victims, cleaning and storing their heads in the fridge. Ever helpful, Carol applied makeup to one head so it was more comely when Doug took it into the shower for a private rendezvous. Carol said she was initially turned off by the head but learned to have "a lot of fun with it." The romantic sort, Doug took Carol on little getaways to show her where he dumped the headless corpses.

Carol eventually snitched on Doug to a former boyfriend, who in turn ratted to police. Realizing that she would be implicated in the murders, Carol brought her former beau to an isolated area, fucked him, stabbed him, and hacked off his head. She eventually got nervous and blabbed to co-workers. She testified against Clark while maintaining that she loved him.

Clark, a self-described "king of the one-night stands" who wore women's undergarments as a child, claimed that Carol had framed him, alleging that she and her former boyfriend were the true culprits. In court, the sick SOB insisted he was innocent while begging for the death penalty. He taunted the judge at every opportunity and grinned as his conviction was read. In 1983, he was found guilty of six murders and received his coveted death sentence. Carol was convicted of murdering her boyfriend and of aiding Doug in one of the prostitute slayings. All she was doing was helping him get a head! Whoa-ha-ha-ha-ha!

QUOTED (Douglas Clark): "There are a hell of a lot worse things that can happen than to die in the gas chamber. . . . I don't march to the same drummer you do. If we were all like me, Sodom and Gomorrah might look like a nice place to stay."

QUOTED (Carol Bundy): "I don't know if you guys have ever in your life shot anybody, but it's really fun to do. . . . It sounds terrible, but it is."







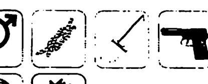

★ 16 ★ ALTON D. COLEMAN & DEBRA BROWN



Al and Deb were a black couple who killed both races in a Midwestern spree during the summer of '84. They raped, robbed, and killed through Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio. The couple's first victim was a friend's nine-year-old child. Al strangled a seven-year-old girl and raped her aunt in Gary, Indiana. Al and Deb beat a Cincinnati couple to death using a giant candlestick, a knife, pliers, and a crowbar. Another pair of victims, a Toledo woman and her ten-year-old daughter, were found dead beneath their home. A seven-week pursuit ended when Coleman and Brown were found sitting on bleachers in Evanston, Illinois. Al was sentenced to die in the electric chair. A gambling, bed-wetting hothead who abused Debra, he could apparently satisfy his desires with anyone, regardless of race, gender, or age. He believed he had been commissioned by blacks to kill blacks.

QUOTED (Debra Brown, regarding one of the murders): "I killed the bitch and I don't give a damn. I had fun out of it. . . . I'm a more kind and understandable and lovable person than people think I am."

CHARACTER WITNESS: A friend of Coleman's called Al "an extremely pleasant type of guy."

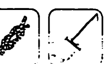
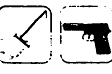
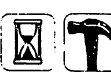

★ 17 ★
JOHN NORMAN COLLINS
"The Michigan Co-ed Killer"



A handsome, muscular, oversexed, all-American student at Eastern Michigan University, Collins was used to getting what he wanted from women. What he wanted was to kill them. Most of his victims were large-breasted co-eds who in the late sixties made the mistake of accepting rides from him. He severed his first victim's hands and feet and even had the nerve to tell funeral-home directors that he was a friend who wanted to photograph the corpse. (They refused.) He stabbed his second victim forty-seven times. His third was shot and strangled, but Collins was nice enough not to rape her—she had her *period*, for God's sake! The fourth victim, a sixteen-year-old, was bound, whipped with a belt buckle, and had her skull crushed. Police found cloth jammed down her throat and a tree branch stuffed in her vagina. The next to fall prey, a thirteen-year-old, had been strangled, raped, and sliced open. Police found clues in a rural Michigan farmhouse, which was subsequently destroyed by arson. Cops later discovered five slit lilacs placed near the farm, as if the killer was teasing them about his five victims. Collins raped the sixth girl and shot her in the skull, then needlessly stabbed her again and again. Celebrity psychic Peter Hurkos was brought on the case and said that the killer was well-built and younger than twenty-five. He prophesied one more murder.

He was right. Collins poured a caustic fluid on his last victim's breasts and stuck her underwear up her hole. He hinted to girlfriends that he was the Co-ed Killer, and campus rumors made him a suspect. Hair clippings found on the last victim's panties matched those from the basement of John's uncle. Collins was apprehended, and the beefy rapist cried like a baby upon his arrest. He was sentenced to a minimum of twenty years' hard labor.

QUOTED (in a college English paper): "If a person wants something, he alone is the deciding factor of whether or not to take it—regardless of what society thinks may be right or wrong.... It's the same if a person holds a gun on somebody—it's up to him to decide whether to take the other's life or not."

★ 18 ★
ADOLFO de JESUS CONSTANZO
"The Matamoros Cult Killer"



A homosexual voodoo cult leader and male model, Constanzo managed a dope-running operation in Matamoros, Mexico. At the Santa Elena Ranch, a hundred-acre clod of parched earth just across the Rio Grande from Texas, Constanzo used the African religion *Palo Mayombe* to his own gory ends. He duped his disciples into believing that human sacrifice protected them from cops and rivals and that bullets would bounce off them. The cult practiced their rituals in a dilapidated shack with blood-soaked walls. Black cauldrons contained an ungodly swill of herbs, animal parts, and human brains. For a change of pace, the cult sometimes threw in human hearts and lungs, stirring well. They skinned some victims alive. One was scalded to death. Another supposedly had his heart ripped out while he was still breathing. Yet another was castrated, had a toe and a nipple removed, and then had his neck snapped. Constanzo (called *El Padrino*, or Godfather, by his followers) performed or oversaw the killings, which were said to have excited him sexually.



In April of 1989, police were drawn to the "Hell Ranch" when one of the cultists, assured of his invincibility, drove through a barricade. Cult members, certain that no harm would come to them, laughed as they led cops from body to stinking body—thirteen in a mass grave at the Ranch, two more a few miles south. One of the corpses was that of Mark Kilroy, a blond gringo student who had been abducted while he celebrated Spring Break in Matamoros. Kilroy's spine, genitals, and heart were missing. Many of the other victims also had their spines removed—Constanzo and his disciples wore them as good-luck necklaces.

The stupid-ass cultists were, of course, arrested on the spot. Constanzo and other higher-ups had already fled and were later traced to Mexico City. In the midst of a gun battle with police, Constanzo commanded his henchmen to kill him and his male lover. Constanzo's group of *narcosatanicos* were thought to have committed at least nine additional spine-removal murders in Mexico City.

QUOTED (Sara Maria Aldrete Villareal, the cult's high priestess, on the strange power Constanzo held over his believers): "If he tells you to do something right now, you will do it. I don't even know why, but you will do it."

★ 19 ★
WILLIAM E. COOK



Raised by his parents in an abandoned mine shaft until mom died and dad split, li'l Billy was the only one of the Cook kids who couldn't find foster parents. Like Charlie Manson, he spent most of his youth in reform schools and in the pen, where he nearly croaked a fellow inmate with a baseball bat. Upon reaching adulthood, he tracked down his father and told him, "I'm gonna live by the gun and roam."



A short bulldog of a man, the hitchhiking killer had HARD LUCK tattooed on his left hand. His malformed right eyelid never closed, lending his appearance a sleepwalking wickedness. In the last days of 1950, he hijacked a car in Texas, put its owner in the trunk, and drove until he ran out of gas. He flagged down Carl Mosser and his family, forcing them at gunpoint to drive aimlessly for seventy-two hours in a crazy overlapping pattern through four states. Mosser tried and failed to overtake Cook at a Wichita Falls gas station. Cook then commanded him to drive to a deserted road and pumped lead into all five members of the Mosser family. He shot their dog, too, stuffed the six corpses into the car, and drove to Missouri, where he dumped them—shades of his childhood?—into an abandoned mine shaft. A cop trailed Cook to Blythe, California, but Cook turned the tables and forced the officer to drive into the desert, binding him and throwing his uniformed body

into the sagebrush. Cook drove away in the police car until he realized it was a bit too conspicuous. He strong-armed another driver out of a car and struggled with him as the auto rolled away unmanned. Cook shot the feisty vehicle owner in the head and left his body in a ditch near Yuma, Arizona.

He was apprehended by Mexican police six hundred miles south of Tijuana. Cook retained the chip on his shoulder, jabbing his elbow into a prison doctor's guts and hissing at the crowd assembled for his execution. After being gassed in December, 1952, Cook's body was publicly displayed by an undertaker. Hordes of the morbidly curious ogled the lifeless gunman.

QUOTED (in his last official words to a prison chaplain): "I hate everybody's guts."

★ 20 ★ DEAN CORLL "The Man With the Candy"



Dean was born on Christmas Eve, 1939, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. A sickly child, he was a mommy's boy who had been emotionally heckled by his father. The sensitive tot was once traumatized by peers at a birthday party. According to a friend, Dean "turned into a fag" while in the Army. He became a manager in his mom's candy company after resuming civilian life and was often seen handing out sweetened treats to local children. When mom closed shop in the late sixties, something snapped inside the corpulent candy man.

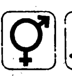
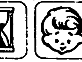
Fond of snuggling up with his Snoopy doll, Corll hosted glue-sniffing parties for young boys in a blighted Houston neighborhood. He promised to pay his teenaged helpers Elmer Wayne Henley and David Owen Brooks two hundred dollars a pop for bringing young males to his home. Once there, he'd handcuff his new friends to a wooden board, then viciously sodomize and murder them. In the course of their torture, Corll sometimes planted a seventeen-inch dildo all the way up their tender young behinds. On occasion, he bit off their dicks. His oldest victim was a college student, the youngest a boy of nine.

One night in August, 1973, Henley enraged Corll by bringing not only a boy to his home, but a girl. Yuck! Henley and his acquaintances passed out in the midst of huffing paint from paper bags. Elmer awoke to find himself handcuffed to the torture board, but he persuaded Dean to set him loose with assurances that he'd help him slay the others. He later snatched Dean's gun and shot him six times, killing the portly sadomasochistic murderer. A shaken Henley notified police.

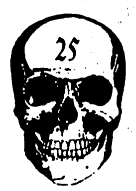
Houston cops uncovered "wall-to-wall bodies," the corpses of seventeen boys, placed under a floor in a boat shed Corll had rented. A bag containing several sets of male genitalia was also discovered on the premises. Ten more bodies were found at two other sites. At the time, the twenty-seven cadavers constituted the largest serial-killing spree in twentieth-century America.

Brooks, who said Corll once gave him ten bucks for allowing Dean to blow him, was given a life sentence. Henley was given five hundred and ninety-four years in jail. When John Wayne Gacy broke Corll's "record" in the early eighties by slaughtering thirty-three young males, Henley seemed jealous, insisting that the police must have missed a few bodies.

CHARACTER WITNESS (a relative of Corll's who requested anonymity): "Dean was a good boy.... He was almost *too* good, tried to do favors for people, always tried to make the best of every situation."

★ 21 ★ JUAN CORONA



In May, 1971, police in Northern California unearthed twenty-five bodies, some hacked beyond recognition, in peach orchards near the Feather River. The killings were apparently homosexual in nature, for some victims were found with their pants down near their ankles. Most of the dead were alcoholic transients, migrant workers hired to work the fields. Police estimated that all had been killed within the previous five or six weeks.

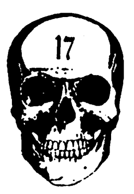


Pink receipts found in the clothing of two victims were inscribed with the name of Juan Corona, a labor contractor and diagnosed schizo. In his ranch house near the peach orchards, Corona kept a ledger containing the names of at least seven victims alongside dates which may have corresponded with their murders. Bloodstains were found in his van and Chevy Impala. Police arrested Corona and charged him with the murders.

The burly father of four was convicted on circumstantial evidence and was given twenty-five life terms. There were hints during the trial that he didn't act alone. Doubt lingers as to whether Corona committed the slayings, and some Chicanos insist he was the victim of a racist frame-up. While writing a letter to a supporter, Corona was stabbed in his cell by four inmates, who blinded him in one eye.

★ 22 ★ JEFFREY DAHMER "The Milwaukee Cannibal"



He was a lonely boy. His parents were always screaming at each other. They divorced by the time he finished high school, and his mother moved to Wisconsin with his younger brother. Jeffrey was left behind.

He had tried being the class clown. He staged phony epileptic fits in the hallways. He made sheep noises in class. He used a funny little walk—four steps forward, two steps back—in his trips to and from school. Still, his classmates didn't get it.

Less than a month after graduation, he picked up a hitchhiker and brought him home. Finally, a friend. Someone to talk to. After a few beers, his companion wanted to leave. Alone again, left behind. Jeffrey strangled him with a barbell and chopped him into tiny little bits.

Too awkward to deal with the living, Jeffrey Dahmer found solace in dead flesh. A chemist's son, he enjoyed scraping meat off animals' bones, using acid from a chemistry kit dad had given him. A neighbor once found a dog's head impaled on a stake near Dahmer's Ohio home. When Jeffrey graduated to killing humans, he compared stripping their flesh to "skinning a chicken."

Dahmer became an Army medic shortly after his first murder and was known for drinking himself into oblivion while Black Sabbath pounded away in his headphones. After being discharged, he moved into his grandmother's house near Milwaukee and found a job working for a blood bank. In 1986, he flapped his weenie in full view of some Milwaukee children and was arrested. His grandmother later asked him to leave. In 1988, family members found a vat filled with chemicals and bones in grandma's basement. Dahmer later confessed to having killed three men while living there.

A chain-smoker and full-blown beer junkie, Dahmer settled into his job at the Ambrosia Chocolate Factory. He moved into a low-rent apartment (924 North 25th Street, #213) in a black neighborhood on Milwaukee's west side. He was arrested in 1988 for offering a Laotian boy fifty bucks to pose for nude pictures. He eventually served ten months in prison, where he

was probably raped. He emerged in March, 1990, with a new-found hatred of blacks.

A homosexual who abhorred homosexuality, Dahmer cruised gay nightspots in Milwaukee and Chicago. He was ejected from one sex club for enticing men into a private room and drugging them unconscious. Using the ruse of a free photo session, he turned to luring young men, most of them black and gay, back to his pad.

Dahmer's apartment was equipped with a high-tech surveillance system and numerous locks to ensure that no one escaped. He spiked his victims' drinks with powdered Halcion and strangled them after they passed out. Once they were dead and he was certain they would never, ever leave him, he had sex with the corpse, either blowing it or slipping on a condom and riding the Hershey Highway.

Dahmer snapped Polaroids of his victims in various phases of mutilation. He boiled and saved their skulls. He dismembered their remains with a power saw and placed their body parts in an acid-filled plastic vat. Jeffrey kept the vat near his bed so he could sleep beside his decomposing lovers.

His downstairs neighbors heard him screaming at someone late at night and were puzzled when they didn't hear anyone respond. Another neighbor complained to Dahmer of the putrid odors billowing from his apartment. With deceptive grace, he apologized and told her that his refrigerator was on the blink, causing his meat to spoil. Dahmer also charmed Milwaukee police in May, 1991, explaining that the Asian youth who had run screaming from his apartment with blood trickling down his ass was simply a confused boyfriend. The cops returned the boy to Dahmer's custody, and Jeff killed him shortly thereafter. Ironically, the victim's brother was the boy Dahmer was jailed for trying to entice in 1988.

Dahmer heightened his killing pace into the summer. When a hysterical, partially handcuffed Tracy Edwards stopped a squad car and said he was nearly murdered by a man on North 25th Street, police were forced to investigate. Inside Dahmer's fly-infested apartment they discovered a human head sitting in the refrigerator. In all, they found four heads and seven skulls. Three bodies slowly dissolved in Dahmer's bedroom vat. A kettle in his closet contained male genitals and a hand.

There was no food in Dahmer's apartment, only condiments. He told the police he had stashed one victim's heart in the freezer "to eat later." He testified that he seasoned some of his victims with salt, pepper, and meat tenderizer. Witnesses said he meowed like a cat as he was being led away in handcuffs.

Jeffrey Dahmer will be eligible for parole in the year 2928. Until then, you can write to him at the Columbia Correctional Institution in Portage, Wisconsin.

QUOTED (from a prepared statement delivered in a monotonous voice at his sentencing): "This has never been a case of trying to get free. I never wanted freedom. Frankly, I wanted death for myself.... I hated no one. I knew I was sick, or evil, or both. Now I believe I was sick. I know that I will have to turn to God to help me get through each day. I should have stayed with God. I tried and I failed, and created a holocaust."



★ 23 ★
RONNIE DeFEO
"The Amityville Murderer"



This cocky, hairy, macho goombah from Amityville, New York, frequently threatened to kill his family. He once pointed an unloaded gun at dad's head and pulled the trigger. One night in the fall of 1974, while his family slept, he went from room to room and blasted their scalps onto their pillows. Claiming that he's "not a pig," he hid the bullet cartridges and cleaned up afterwards. He told police that since dad had Mafia connections, the mob must have done it.

The small-time hood, part-time junkie, and full-time pathological liar gave conflicting accounts until he finally broke, blaming his spree on an unhappy home life. He was known for an explosive temper—once bopping a friend in the head with a live clam—and had often engaged in Oedipally vicious fights with his father. It seemed that pop had threatened to throw Junior out of the house, and that was too much for the spoiled rich kid to take.

DeFeo told people he wanted to be as famous as Manson. He copped an insanity plea and practiced his lunatic act in prison, fine-tuning a sinister laugh, squawking like a bird, lighting fires, and stripping naked. No one bought it, and Ronnie was convicted of all six murders. The subsequent owners of DeFeo's house left after a month, claiming it was haunted and laying the groundwork for that silly movie, *The Amityville Horror.*

QUOTED (at his trial): "When I got a gun in my hand, there's no doubt in my mind who I am. I am God."

CHARACTER WITNESS (Ronnie's girlfriend): "He was a perfect gentleman—quiet, reserved, polite."





Jeff Dahmer as a lad.

★ 24 ★
ALBERT DeSALVO
"The Boston Strangler"



Beset with a rhinoceros-sized sex drive and a frigid wife, this big-handed schizophrenic terrorized Beantown women in the early sixties. Posing as a detective, plumber, or modeling-agency scout, he'd talk his way into a victim's apartment, rape her, strangle her with a cord, tie the murder weapon in a neat bow under her chin, and provocatively position the corpse. He preyed mainly on middle-aged and elderly women, sometimes raping them with foreign objects. In his final foray, he broke into a woman's residence, fondled her naughty bits for a while, apologized, and left. The woman's description led to DeSalvo's arrest. He received a life sentence for robberies and sex crimes which occurred prior to the murders and was never formally charged as the Boston Strangler. He confessed to the thirteen Strangler killings during a stay at the nut house. On November 26, 1973, he died in a Massachusetts jail cell from knife wounds to the heart.

For DeSalvo, an appalling childhood and monstrous libido were a deadly mix. As a kid, li'l Al watched as daddy broke mommy's fingers one at a time. Booze-guzzling dad once sold Albert and his sister into slavery for half a year. Albert practiced archery on cats and was arrested for breaking and entering at age twelve. Bisexual as a teen, he astounded neighborhood kids with his capacity for the eternal boner. He claimed he could cum in his pants simply by fantasizing and be ready to rouse his soldier again moments later, bragging that "five or six times a day don't mean much to me." Might not mean anything to *you*, Al, but *we're* impressed!

QUOTED (regarding the murder of a graduate student): "Once I stabbed her once, I couldn't stop.... I hit her and hit her and hit her...."







★ 25 ★
NANNIE DOSS
"The Giggling Grandma"



A reader of *True Romance*, Nannie poisoned four of five husbands because she thought they were cheating on her. If they weren't, she was certain that they were *planning* on it. The Tulsa, Oklahoma, resident also blotted out two of her sisters, two of her kids, her mom, a grandson, and a nephew. Using rat poison and arsenic, she slipped lethal doses into



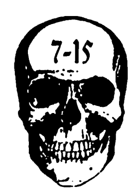
DeSalvo flaunting a giant hand.

one husband's whisky and another's stewed prunes—the ultimate laxative! Nannie received a life sentence in 1964 and died a year later. She got her nickname when she laughed while confessing to police.

QUOTED (on why she killed so many husbands): "I was searching for the perfect mate, the real romance of life."

★ 26 ★ AMELIA ELIZABETH DYER "The Reading Baby Farmer"



This former Salvation Army soldier killed babies and is therefore very special to us. Operating in England during the late 1800s, she collected boarding fees for the cuddly little infants, choked them to death, and dumped their fuzzy bodies in a canal. A bargeman working along the Thames River dredged up a dead, swollen toddler and found tape wrapped around its throat. Dyer, realizing that her fifteen-year career was over, tried to kill herself upon being arrested. Her story may have given rise to those "How do you make a dead baby float?" jokes (one bottle of Coke, two scoops of dead baby).

QUOTED: "You'll know all mine by the tape around their necks."

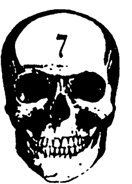


Nannie Doss (above): romance and rat poison.

Amelia Elizabeth Dyer (below): mean-tempered baby-choker.



★ 27 ★ MARK ESSEX



Remembered by friends of his family as a quiet, sensitive Baptist, this black Kansan first experienced full-on racism when he entered the US Navy in 1969. It left, shall we say, a bitter taste in his mouth. At his court-martial for going AWOL, he told officers he "was tired of going to white people and telling them my problems and not getting anything done about it." After his discharge, he rented a hovel in a depressed New Orleans neighborhood and continued to brood about the white man.



On a Sunday morning in January, 1973, he stormed into the Howard Johnson's Motel armed with a rifle. A black maid screamed when she saw him. "Don't worry," he told her. "We're not killing blacks today, just whites. The revolution's here." Essex (and possible accomplices) proceeded to torch mattresses and drapes with revolutionary zeal. The fire eventually spread to six floors. Throughout the day, he killed two hotel workers, three cops, and a pair of newlyweds as they clutched each other in their arms. As promised, all of the victims were white. Essex wounded twenty-six others. Hundreds of police surrounded the building and traded bullets with him. His siege lasted for hours and by the end, the battle was being televised live on national TV.

As night fell and a cold rain started, Essex ensconced himself in a rooftop bunker. A Marine helicopter was sent in, and its gunfire supposedly tore him to shreds at 9:25 p.m. However, police say they continued to hear shouts of "Power to the people!" and "Come and get me, you motherfucking pigs!" emanating from the roof. One cop insisted that he saw a black female sniper. Two dozen police raided the roof the next afternoon. They wound up shooting at each other, because Essex was dead, with over a hundred slugs in his body. If there were other gunmen, they made a

miraculous getaway though a virtual wall of piggies. It's still a mystery as to why Essex chose Howard Johnson's—are those all-you-can-eat curly fried clams *that* bad?

QUOTED (from graffiti on the walls of his run-down house): "Political power comes from the power of a gun.... The quest for freedom is death. Then by death shall I escape to freedom.... My destiny lies in the bloody death of racist pigs."





★ 28 ★
CHRISTINE FALLING



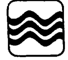
A fat, doltish, epileptic baby sitter from a poor-white-trash section of southern Florida, Christine strangled or suffocated five youngsters placed under her care. She is also suspected in the death of an elderly man who died the day she started working as his maid.

When Christine was born, her mom was sixteen, her dad sixty-five. She was orphaned at three and adopted by abusive parents. At nine, she was placed in a foster home. She dropped out of junior high and was married for six weeks in her early teens. She was known as a cat-torturing hypochondriac who needlessly visited a hospital more than fifty times over a two-year period. Before becoming a baby-killer, she was arrested for passing bad checks.

Her first victim was two-year-old Cassidy "Muffin" Johnson in 1980. A second tot, Jeffrey M. Davis, was killed soon thereafter. Inexplicably, Falling was permitted to baby-sit Jeffrey's cousin as his family attended the funeral. The cousin also croaked. Since Christine acted helplessly bewildered after each death, no one suspected her. Two more toddlers died, one of whom was thought to be the victim of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Falling initially denied any involvement in the deaths. Her sister claimed that Christine admitted to all five killings, and the minimum-wage baby-snuffer finally 'fessed up to "smotherating" three of the kids.

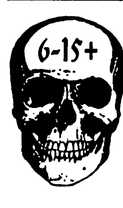
QUOTED: "I love young'uns. I don't know why I done what I done.... The way I done it, I saw it done on TV shows. I had my own way, though. Simple and easy. No one would hear them scream."



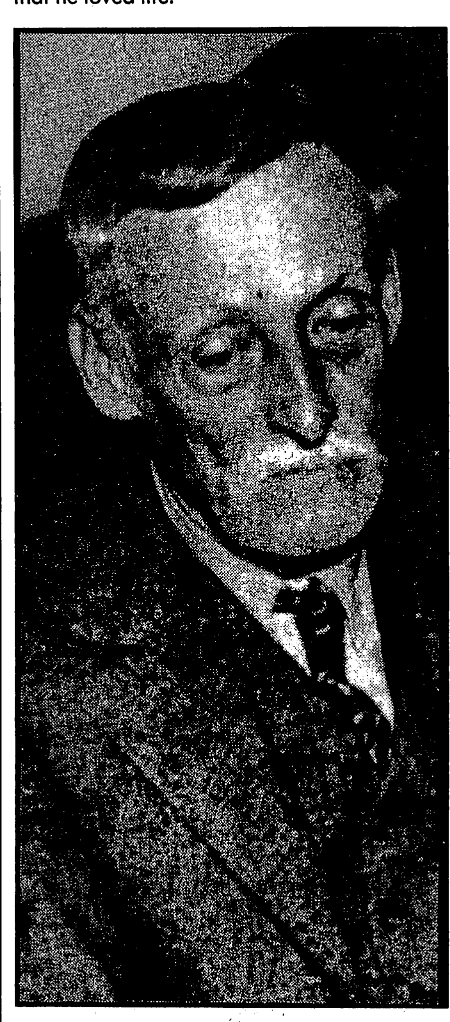




★ 29 ★
ALBERT FISH
"The Moon Maniac"



Albert Fish loved children. He loved them boiled with carrots and onions, but he loved them just the same. He also loved eating shit, ramming flaming, alcohol-soaked cotton swabs up his ass, and permanently embedding needles in his scrotum—you might say that he loved life.



A house painter and father of six, he apparently went bonkers after his wife abandoned him for another man. Given custody of his children, he demanded that they eat raw meat with him during full moons. Handing them a paddle studded with five-inch nails, he begged his kiddies to spank him until blood flowed down his sagging buttocks. Fish once took the kids on a vacation where they watched him stand on a hilltop screaming, "I am Christ! I am Christ!" He said he received visions of hell, angels, and J.C. himself. Mr. Fish said that God commanded him to castrate boys.

In 1928, posing as a "Mr. Howard," he befriended the Budd family and persuaded them to let him escort their daughter Grace to a birthday party. He brought the girl to a vacant cottage in Westchester County, New York, and strangled her. He chopped off her head and sawed the remainder in two. For the next nine days he ate her flesh, preparing it with vegetables. This apparently turned him on to no end. Hopelessly masochistic, he confessed six years later in a letter written to Grace's mother.

He was promptly arrested in New York City and later claimed to have molested more than four hundred children over a twenty-year period. As he did with Grace Budd, he took them to empty buildings, where he murdered, dismembered, and ate them. He carved them up with his "implements of hell"—a saw, cleavers, and knives which he toted around in a small satchel. He would sometimes gag victims before taking their lives, but he preferred to hear their dying screams. It has been suggested that the murdered children were sacrificial lambs whose deaths purged Fish of his guilt pangs.

Fish said his mind originally became unhinged when he was a child in foster homes, where he suffered brutal beatings and witnessed unspeakable atrocities performed on others. He remained a warped old codger after his arrest, exposing himself during a prison church ceremony and using a sharpened bone from one of his last meals to lacerate his stomach in the shape of the cross. He smiled as he approached the electric chair, helping the executioner apply the electrodes. The first jolt failed, apparently short-circuited by the needles—more than twenty of them—which Fish had planted in and around his balls. His last statement, littered with obscenities, was never released.

QUOTED: "I am not insane. I am just queer. I don't understand myself.... What a thrill that will be if I have to die in the electric chair. It will be the supreme thrill, the only one I haven't tried."











★ 30 ★
JOSEPH P. FRANKLIN

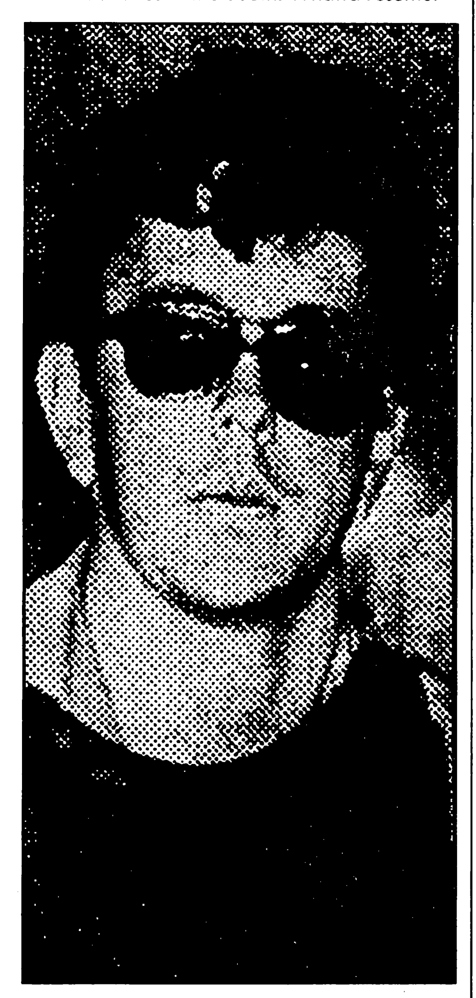


This former Klansman hated Jungle Fever in all its manifestations. He wore a Nazi armband in high school, picketed Golda Meir's 1970 visit to the White House, and was arrested in '76 for spraying Mace at an interracial couple in a Washington, D.C., suburb. He was found guilty in the sniper murders of two black men who were jogging with white women in a Salt Lake City park (Franklin called it "justifiable homicide") and the fatal shooting of a vanilla-'n'-chocolate couple in Madison, Wisconsin.

Those convictions are enough to keep Franklin behind bars for life, but he is thought to have committed up to fifteen killings in seven states from '77 to '80. He is the prime suspect in the sniper killings of: a gentile who was leaving a St. Louis bar mitzvah; a black-and-white couple outside an Oklahoma City supermarket; a black manager of an Atlanta Taco Bell; two black Indianapolis males shot to death in separate incidents; two blacks who were walking on Cincinnati railroad tracks; and an interracial couple murdered on a Johnstown, Pennsylvania, bridge.

Franklin is also thought to have killed a Wisconsin woman whom he picked up hitchhiking and had casually mentioned that she once dated a Jamaican. He was acquitted on a technicality in the 1980 ambush shooting of National Urban League President Vernon Jordan. He is widely believed to be the man who

shot and crippled publisher Larry Flynt—*Hustler*, after all, is one of the few porn mags which shows black-and-white couples getting it on. Franklin was also convicted of bombing what he called a "synagogue of Satan" in Chattanooga and was suspected in several bank robberies in the South. Whatta resumé!



While serving a life sentence at the hard-nosed federal prison in Marion, Illinois, he was attacked and stabbed fifteen times by six black inmates. He survived and apparently hasn't strayed from his belief that blacks are "dumb apes."

QUOTED: "Race-mixing is a sin against God and nature.... I feel it is my duty as a servant of God to protect white womanhood from any injury or degradation."






★ 31 ★ JOHN LINLEY FRAZIER "The Tarot Murderer"



This bearded leprechaun embodies the logical extension of environmental fanaticism—DEATH! After one too many mescaline trips, the Santa Cruz-area car mechanic quit his job, telling his boss he couldn't "contribute to the death cycle of the planet anymore." Leaving his wife, he took residence in a ramshackle cabin.

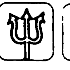
His new pad was located in an area known for countercultural dabbling. It sat a half-mile from the house of Dr. Victor Ohta, an eye doctor who was hassled by wandering hippies and had started building a wall to keep them out. Frazier had previously stolen binoculars from Ohta's house and told a friend that the Ohtas were "materialistic" and "should be snuffed." On October 19, 1970, he entered their home and encountered Mrs. Ohta. He stole her gun, bound her with one of her husband's neckties, and shot her. Mr. Ohta's secretary arrived with one of the Ohta children. Frazier bound and shot them. Mr. Ohta then came home with his other child. Both suffered their predecessors' fates. Frazier then pecked out a letter on the Ohtas' typewriter and torched the place. He signed the note with names of Tarot figures and left it under their Rolls Royce's windshield wiper. Frazier stole the family station wagon and set it ablaze in a nearby train tunnel. Authorities found his five victims' bodies floating in the swimming pool while the Ohta house burned.



Apparently, even the hippies didn't like Frazier, and they tipped off the fuzz. For his trial, the errant tree savior shaved one side of his head, one eyebrow, and half of his beard. He was given a death sentence, which may be justified merely on the basis of that hairdo.

QUOTED (from the note he left on the Rolls Royce): "Halloween 1970. Today World War III begins, as brought to you by the People of the Free Universe. From this day forward, anyone and/or company of persons who misuses the natural environment or destroys same will suffer the penalty of death by the People of the Free Universe. I and my comrades from this day forth will fight until death or freedom against anything or anyone who does not support natural life on this planet. Materialism must die or mankind will."







★ 32 ★ JOHN WAYNE GACY "The Killer Clown"



At press time, this jowly Chicago-area building contractor holds the official (i.e., proven) All-Time USA Serial-Killing Body-Count Championship. Administered daily enemas while a baby, this son of a rampaging alcoholic was nailed in the noggin with a playground swing and experienced subsequent blackouts. He served as a chaplain for the Iowa Jaycees and managed a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise before setting up a construction business outside Chicago.

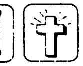
While drunkenly cruising the Windy City's gay districts for male meat, he sometimes placed a red light atop his Oldsmobile, ensnaring victims by impersonating a copper. On other occasions, he'd draw them to his home with offers of money or a job. He'd bring them to a torture room and demonstrate his "handcuff trick." When his prey was cuffed, Gacy knocked him out with a chloroform-soaked rag and buttfucked him. After the doomed youth regained consciousness, Gacy did his "rope trick," using a stick to twist the noose around his victim's neck while reciting Bible verses, particularly the Twenty-third Psalm ("The Lord is my shepherd..."). As he killed them, he counseled his prey to courageously face death.

When police investigated a lead about a missing fifteen-year-old male, they found nearly thirty bodies buried in and around Gacy's residence, many of them stuffed in a crawl space beneath his house. More bodies were found in a nearby river. Gacy initially denied involvement, then blamed the murders on an alter ego named "Jack" during his trial. He was sentenced to death by lethal injection.

If anyone led a double life, it was Gacy. He was active in various civic organizations and was once voted the Junior Chamber of Commerce's "Man of the Year." In 1978, he was photographed with First Lady Rosalynn Carter, who also had the misfortune of posing for a picture with the Reverend Jim Jones. In his spare time, Gacy performed as "Pogo the Clown" at kids' parties and at a local children's hospital. In jail, he makes colorful oil paintings of clowns and cartoon characters. He is known for eagerly answering mail, most of it from female groupies.

QUOTED (after his arrest): "The only thing they can get me for is running a funeral parlor without a license."



★ 33 ★ GERALD GALLEGO "The Sex-Slave Murderer"

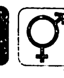
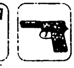
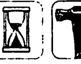


Murder was in Gerald Gallego's blood: His dad was a two-time cop killer who in 1955 became the first person to be executed in Mississippi's gas chamber. At age thirteen, Gerald was committed to the California

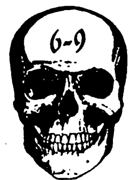
Gacy as "Pogo": a brain-battered, balloon-bobbing, Bible-belching, buttfucking boy-obliterator.

Youth Authority for having sex with a six-year-old. Before his first murder, Gallego had prior arrests for auto theft, burglary, loitering, assault with a deadly weapon, vandalism, and incest with his teenaged daughter. A former trucker and bartender, he had been married four or five times before settling for Charlene Williams, a woman of considerably higher social stature. He committed bigamy by marrying her. Allegedly impotent, he convinced Charlene that his limp linguini could only be cured through a variety of partners, especially young virgins.

It's funny what some people will do for love. Under the pretense of a request to help distribute flyers, Charlene enticed Gerald's "sex slaves" back to his van. Once inside, the victim was bound at gunpoint. Charlene drove or sat in the front seat while victims were raped, sodomized, and forced to suck Gallego's lollipop. Gerald would then take them outside and kill them. They were usually shot, but he killed two Nevada girls with a hammer and was said to have buried an Oregon hitchhiker alive. Under investigators' scrutiny, Charlene, whom Gerald called his "Ding-a-Ling" during tender moments, spilled the beans. Like father, like son: In 1983, Gallego was sentenced to die in California's gas chamber.

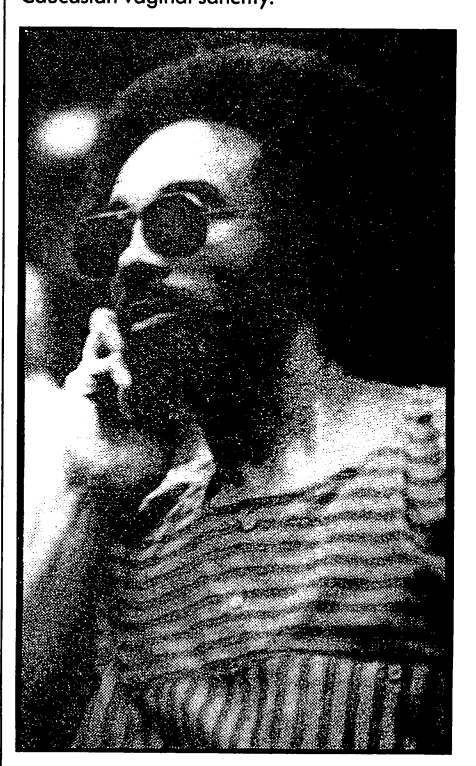





★ 34 ★
CARLTON GARY
"The Stocking Strangler"



A brainy, Afro-sprouting black male model from Columbus, Georgia's slums, Gary killed the type of priggish white society women for whom his mother had toiled as a maid. An obsessive showerer, he staked out houses in a wealthy Columbus neighborhood, preying only on widows and spinsters. He first struck in October, 1977, breaking into a sixty-year-old woman's house and strangling her with her own stocking. Eight days later and only four blocks away, he felled another white matron. Police arrested a suspect and squeezed a confession out of him. Meanwhile, Gary strangled an eighty-nine-year-old white woman.

Responding to local hysteria, one woman had a bolted lock installed on her front door. Unfortunately, it had been installed upside down, and Gary entered her house and strangled her. He choked one victim with her scarf and another with a window cord. Ruth Schwob, who survived one of Gary's attacks, recalled being mildly aroused as she lost consciousness during her rape-strangulation. Gary's spree spawned "copycat" slayers and a revenge killer of black women. The KKK promised to place sentries on the street to guard Caucasian vaginal sanctity.

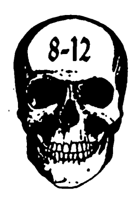


The murders ceased in mid-1978. Gary, who had been dating a female police deputy during his reign, was arrested in South Carolina in 1979 on a robbery charge. After escaping prison in 1984, he was re-arrested and finally charged with the Stocking Stranglings. Investigators pointed to "Negroid" pubic hairs which they said linked him to the crimes. Apparently suffering from extreme dissociation, Gary

recalled being at the murder scenes but of having watched someone else, whom he called "John," do the killings. He had no recollection of meeting his victims, but he remembered seeing them tortured and strangled. The drug-dealing part-time drummer with webbed fingers and an elongated middle toe was sentenced to death.



★ 35 ★ ROBIN GECHT

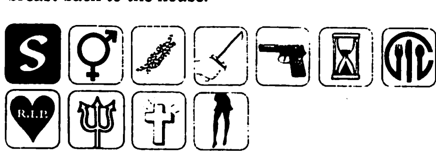


To the straight world, Robin Gecht was an ineffectual, unemployed Chicago carpenter. In the malleable minds of his three young followers, he was a Satanic high priest with power over life and death. He prowled the city late at night in his van, searching for prostitutes or willing females. Gecht's crew attacked blacks, whites, Hispanics, and Orientals—a virtual Rainbow Coalition of death—cannibalizing many of them. In every instance, they removed the woman's breasts, which were sacrificed over an altar in Gecht's attic apartment. Mammary morsels were once eaten as a sacrament. Gecht frequently read Bible passages during the ceremonies. His cult was also thought to have been involved in the drive-by shooting of a male.



When Gecht was arrested for stabbing a teenaged hooker in 1982, police became suspicious after learning he was a former employee of John Wayne Gacy's. In Gecht's former apartment, cops found bone fragments and crosses burned on the walls. The other three cult members were taken into custody, and each began ratting on the others. Is there no honor among Satanists?

QUOTED (to one of his followers): "Bring a breast back to the house."



★ 36 ★ ED GEIN "The Original Psycho"



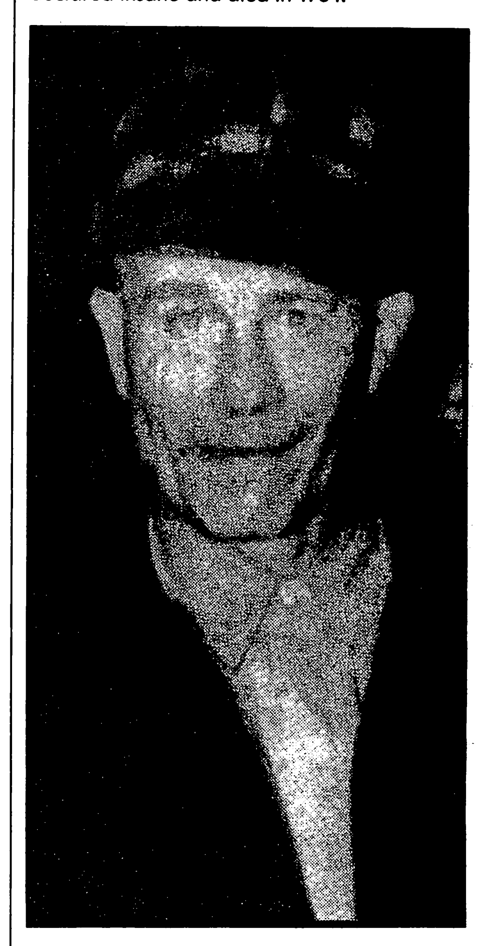
One of the weirdest mother-fuckers ever to walk the planet, compounded by the fact that he lived in a tiny, flannel-and-earflaps Wisconsin farming town. Raised by a castrating mom, Ed and his brother grew up with the notion that marriage was wrong. After mom and bro died within a year of each other, Gein (rhymes with "keen") went completely out of his gourd. He reportedly jerked off over mom's dead body.

The federal government paid him a subsidy not to farm, so Ed searched for a hobby. If he had chosen coins, stamps, or model airplanes, he never would have achieved celebrity. Beset with a morbid interest in anatomy, he employed his friend Gus to help him dig graves. Their first unearthed body had been lying only a few yards from Mama Gein's burial site. Ed scoured the local newspaper for death notices: Being a gourmet, he liked his corpses *fresh.*

Gein became a killer when Gus was sent away to the funny farm. He shot Mary Hogan in 1954, hauling her body home on a sled. In 1957 he killed Bernice Worden, a hardware-store worker in the village of Plainfield. Worden's son remembered that Gein had been in the store the previous day and had mentioned he'd be back for radiator coolant. Gein purchased antifreeze before slaughtering Mrs. Worden, and receipts led police to his house.

Ed's abode was a typically messy bachelor's pad. What police discovered there makes Jeffrey Dahmer seem like a vegetarian: a woman's heart in a pan on the stove; human entrails in the refrigerator; a shoe box with nine vulvas in it; another box containing four noses; a pair of stockings made from human skin; a soup bowl carved from half a skull; a vest made from a female's torso; skulls placed on a bedpost; nine masks peeled from women's faces, some hanging as trophies on the wall; parts of a scalp placed in a Quaker Oats box; a drum fashioned by pulling human skin over a can; four chairs with human-skin seats; bracelets and a purse handle made of skin; and the heads of ten women. Some of the skin souvenirs had been lovingly treated with oil as if they were baseball gloves. Ed placed lipstick on a few of the masks and tied a red ribbon on one of the vulvas. A headless, disemboweled woman was hanging upside down in Gein's shed. Police estimated that Ed's house contained the remains of at least fifteen women.

Under questioning, Ed revealed that he committed his crimes beneath the full moon, dancing around dressed in the grisly vestments. He admitted to necrophiliac murder but staunchly denied being a thief, claiming he had stolen Bernice Worden's cash register to "see how it worked" and intended to return it. He was declared insane and died in 1984.



Ed had joshed with Plainfield residents that he owned a "collection of shrunken heads," but no one took him seriously. There are unproven rumors that he often visited neighbors bearing gifts of "fresh liver." His house was set aflame one night and burned to a crisp.

CHARACTER WITNESS (a neighbor): "Good old Ed. Kind of a loner and maybe a little bit odd with that sense of humor of his, but just the guy to call in to sit with the kiddies when me and the old lady want to go to the show."










★ 37 ★ DELFINA & MARIA de JESUS GONZALES



Whoremasters and traders in white slavery, these sisters owned the Rancho El Angel, a heavily fortressed bordello in Guanajuato State, Mexico. Recruiting girls through help-wanted ads for domestics, they operated a prostitution ring for over ten years,

ending with their abduction in 1963. Upon arrival at the Rancho, a girl was "broken in" by being force-fed booze and gang-raped by brothel workers. The next day, she'd be beaten senseless and made to submit to a string of johns (juans?) through the night. Pregnant prostitutes were suspended by their hands from a ceiling and bludgeoned in the stomach to abort the fetus. The Gonzales sisters kept their girls strung out with a steady diet of cocaine and heroin. When a girl's flower of youth was perceived as starting to wither, she was killed. Several migrant workers who had returned from the US with large sums of cash were drugged and murdered. Police found the bodies of eleven males, at least eighty women, and several newborns on the premises. The Gonzaleses tried to persuade officials that all the deaths were from natural causes.









★ 38 ★
JULIO GONZALEZ



After drunkenly fighting with his girlfriend at the Bronx's Happy Land Social Club in 1990, Gonzalez walked to a local Amoco station and filled a plastic bottle with a buck's worth of gas. He returned to the club with two matches and killed more people in one fell swoop than anyone in US history. He watched as firemen battled flames which blocked the club's exit.

Bodies were found stacked on top of one another in what was undoubtedly a mad rush to escape. Most of the victims had suffocated. Many had died so quickly, they were found with drinks in their hands.

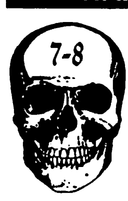
Gonzalez, a bearded Cuban who had come to America as part of 1980's infamous Mariel boatlift, lived beneath a picture of Jesus in a small Bronx apartment. In the weeks before the mass slaying, he lost his job and had broken up with Lydia Feliciano, his girlfriend of eight years. He was seen quarreling with Lydia, a worker at Happy Land, and was ejected by a bouncer. Only six people survived Julio's vengeful onslaught. Unfortunately for him, one of them was Lydia! *Burn, baby, burn/Disco inferno....*

QUOTED (when asked why he set the fire): "I don't know."






★ 39 ★
HARRISON GRAHAM



North Philadelphia is a blighted postindustrial war zone, almost lunar in its pockmarked lifelessness. Harrison "Marty" Graham lived in one of its worst areas, a boarded-up neighborhood where two-dollar packets of heroin are sold on the street. But even by North Philly's standards, Graham's two-room, ninety-dollar-a-month apartment was a bit much. Blood coated the walls, and the floor was awash in a sea of discarded clothes, boxes, mattresses, and used syringes. Fleas swarmed over everything. Graham was evicted because neighbors complained of odors. He barricaded the apartment's entrance with trash and nailed the door shut.

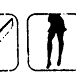
When police pried open the door in the sweltering summer heat of 1987, they found six female bodies, some of them in extreme states of decomposition, swimming amid the debris. One was estimated to have been there for up to a year. Like Graham, all of the women were black junkies. Searching the roof, police discovered leg parts stuffed in a green duffel bag. They later found a torso in a basement a few doors from Graham's building.

After a week-long police search, Graham's mother convinced the unemployed carpenter to confess. Graham related how he escorted women to his flat for drug parties, had sex, and strangled them. What the fuck did he tell each ensuing victim about the bodies lying around his pad?

Graham was almost caught in an earlier incident when a woman spotted body parts on the roof. Worried, she told him to dispose of them. He did. Then he choked her to death.



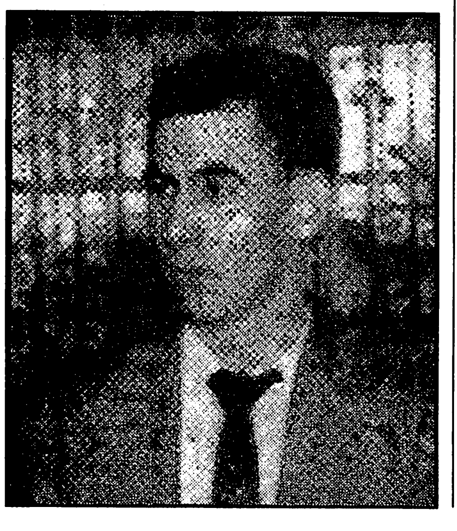




★ 40 ★
JACK GILBERT GRAHAM

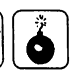


After losing her husband, Graham's mother orphaned little Jack when he was but a seedlin'. BIG mistake. She remarried when Jack was eight and reclaimed him, trying to assuage her guilt by spoiling him with a flood of material bounty. She stood by her son as he delved into petty crime. She once paid back stolen money to keep him from being jailed. When she visited him in Denver late in 1955, Jack gave her what he called a "Christmas package"—fourteen pounds of dynamite equipped with a timer—for her plane flight. Shortly after liftoff, the plane exploded over a Colorado beet farm, killing all its passengers. Graham stood to inherit $150,000 from Mommy Dearest and an additional $37,500 from an insurance policy he had taken out on her. Unemotional upon his abduction, he was gassed in 1957.

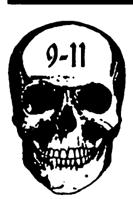


QUOTED (about watching his mother's plane take off): "I felt freer than I have ever felt before in my life."





★ 41 ★
VAUGHN ORRIN GREENWOOD
"The Skid Row Slasher"



Over the winter of 1974-'75, Los Angeles police found the bodies of six downtown derelicts, their throats slit nearly to the neck bone. Most were middle-aged whites and had been slain while drunk or asleep. The killer left evidence of ritualistic abuse, placing cups of blood on his victims' bodies, leaving cryptic marks near their slash wounds, and pouring salt in an outline around their heads. A psychological composite was made of the murderer, intimating that he was a blond Caucasian homosexual. On the night of January 30, 1975, local television aired a hypothetical profile of the Slasher, describing him as a "sexually impotent coward." His pride apparently wounded, he killed again that night or early the next morning.

Greenwood, a thirty-one-year-old black drifter, was arrested in Hollywood in connection with an axe assault occurring next to Burt Reynolds's house. He was indicted in the seven Skid Row Slashings, two Hollywood knife murders, and two 1964 killings. Greenwood had previously served five years for the non-fatal stabbing of his seventy-year-old male lover in Chicago. If he had been more selective while roaming Hollywood, we might have been spared yet another sequel to *Smokey and the Bandit*.





★ 42 ★
BELLE GUNNESS
"Lady Bluebeard"



Lady Belle was a blubbery, cross-dressing gold digger who enticed wealthy Chicagoans with classified ads promising eternal love. After her expectant beaus arrived, she'd poison them as they slept, smash their skulls, hack them to pieces, and bury them. Worst of all, she took their *wallets*! In 1908, when Andrew Helgelien responded to Belle's

ad, Gunness produced her real-life lover and accomplice Ray Lamphere, bragging to Helgelien that Ray was her next husband. Helgelien thought this was strange and tried to escape. His mutilated corpse was found amid the farm's embers, along with the bodies of thirteen others, including three of Belle's children. A headless female body was uncovered in the rubble, along with Belle's dentures.



Chubby murderess Belle Gunness as depicted in a pulp novel.

Lamphere was arrested and told a fellow prisoner that the female carcass wasn't Belle's. He claimed it was that of a woman he and Gunness had lured to the farm and poisoned so police would think Belle was dead. Their scheme's only flaw was that the woman weighed a hundred and thirty pounds less than Belle. He said Gunness threw her own false teeth into the inferno and split. It was estimated that she fled with thirty grand in cash siphoned from a string of flower-bearing suckers.

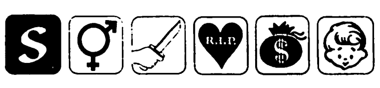
QUOTED (in a letter to Helgelien): "My heart beats in wild rapture for you. Come prepared to stay forever."



★ 43 ★ FRITZ HAARMANN "The Butcher of Hannover"



Cruising Hannover's train station for the human dregs which sifted through there in post-WWI Germany, this fat femme with a high-pitched voice befriended transient youth and offered them shelter. The epileptic pickpocket and police impersonator, aided by his lover Hans Grans, brought boys to a basement apartment, buggered and killed them, carefully butchered their flesh, and sold it as food on the black market. Consumers were unaware they were eating filet of young male. When police searched Haarmann's apartment in 1924, they uncovered several items traced to missing persons. Dredging a local river, they found the bones of twenty-three bodies. Haarmann, who enjoyed the attention his trial brought him, was indicted in twenty-seven murders but said he thought the tally was closer to forty. Hans Grans received only a twelve-year sentence, but German authorities lopped off Haarmann's head.



★ 44 ★ JOHN GEORGE HAIGH "The Acid-Bath Killer"



Incarcerated for fraud, Haigh learned in jail that mice disintegrated when dropped into sulfuric acid. Once freed, he purchased a forty-gallon drum, rubber gloves, some acid, and set about dissolving humans. The smooth Brit talked Olive Durand-Deacon into investing in a fictitious cosmetics factory, which in reality was a storage room. Haigh shot and stripped her, drained a glass of blood from her corpse, placed the body in a drum, and gave her an acid bath. As she disintegrated, he claimed to have relaxed by sipping her blood like so much tomato juice. He also said he chugged down a pint or two of his own urine on occasion. Motivated by cash, Haigh clubbed a well-to-do employer with a blackjack, dipped him into the drum, and assumed his worldly assets. When the man's parents expressed concern, he "interviewed" them separately, murdered them, gave them the acid treatment, and absorbed *their* wealth. After each body had liquefied, he poured the human gumbo into a drain. Police ID'd Durand-Deacon's remains with an undissolved acrylic denture. On trial in 1949, Haigh pled insanity, saying that he loved drinking blood and dreamed about forests of blood-dripping trees. It didn't work, and the state liquidated him.

QUOTED (to police): "Mrs. Durand-Deacon no longer exists. I've destroyed her with acid. You can't prove murder without a body."



★ 45 ★ ROBERT HANSEN



Armed with a rifle, Hansen hunted big game in the Alaskan hinterland. To the severe disadvantage of seventeen hookers and topless dancers, his idea of big game wasn't elk or wild caribou. From 1973-'83, the Anchorage bakery owner flew women to his mountain chalet via a small plane. They were spared if they provided him with free sex. The minute that money was mentioned, their murder was sealed. After binding and sexually abusing his victims for days, he'd strip them and set them free in the woods. Allowing his victims a head start, he gave chase with a rifle and sent them plopping into the subarctic snow. He kept a map of Alaska on which he'd marked twenty-one remote locations, thought to be the sites of his victims' demise. Hansen was given life plus four hundred and sixty-one years. He shall bake chocolate cupcakes no more.

QUOTED: "[I have a] severe inferiority complex with girls."



★ 46 ★ DONALD HARVEY "The Kiss of Death"



A Cincinnati hospital orderly with a passing resemblance to fitness guru Richard Simmons, Harvey joshed with co-workers that he was killing patients. At first, they thought he was only joking. When they realized that a disproportionate number of people were dying on wards where he worked, they phoned a local TV station. A grand-jury probe was ordered in 1987, and Harvey admitted to a reporter that he had killed at least thirty-four patients, most of them old and withering. He suffocated some with a pillow, plastic bags, or by cutting off their oxygen supply. He dosed others with arsenic, rat poison, cyanide, colostomy cleaner, and adhesive remover. Harvey claimed to have felt sated after each killing and spent much of his spare time in the morgue.

Those who knew Harvey described him as charming, if somewhat introverted. The son of a Kentucky family of tobacco-farming Baptists, he lived in a trailer where he collected books on Satanism and kept a list of his victims behind a picture frame. He offed a female neighbor with an arsenic-laced pie, killed a roommate with arsenic pudding, and claimed another non-hospital victim with a death dessert.

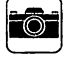
Despite the fact that Harvey said he killed enough humans to fill a bus, police had no solid evidence on him. Harvey plea-bargained to avoid the death penalty, laughing to himself during court proceedings.

QUOTED: "I felt that what I was doing was right. I was putting people out of their misery....I'm doing them a favor."

CHARACTER WITNESS (Harvey's elementary-school teacher): "[Donald was a] precious little boy, a very attractive child who got along with everybody, boys and girls."

CHARACTER WITNESS (Harvey's mother): "My son has always been a good boy. He's still a good boy."




★ 47 ★
LEO HELD



A Boy Scout leader, volunteer fireman, and devout Christian, Leo Held epitomized American blandness. He quietly and methodically tested paper quality at a central Pennsylvania mill. One morning in the fall of 1967, as the leaves changed color and the smell of apples wafted through the cool air, he awoke and ate breakfast. Held saw the kids to school, took his wife to her job, and showed up punctually at work. He walked into the plant with a .38 in one hand and a .45 in the other, knocking out the lights with a bullet to a transformer. He blew away five people, then walked outside and chatted with co-workers as they filed in. He then drove to a local airport and wounded a switchboard operator. Thinking it was a prank, a worker hustled him outside and set him free. Leo drove to his kids' school and circled it a few times, then went home and broke into a house across the street. He killed one neighbor and wounded another as they slept. Stealing their rifle and ammunition, he returned home. A mob had formed outside his house, ready to attack. Police shot him, and Held died in the hospital the next day.

Most of his victims at work were supervisors. The wounded switchboard operator was part of Held's car pool and had scolded him for his erratic driving. The Quiggles, his victims across the street, had frequently irked Held by burning leaves. He was also known to have argued with a seventy-year-old woman about a fallen tree limb. In a previous incident, Held had beaten her over the head with the oversized twig and was taken to court. The woman was not among his murder victims. As Held lay dying in the hospital, he ruefully whispered, "I had one more to go."

QUOTED (as he faced the angry crowd at his door): "Come and get me. I'm not taking any more of their bull."

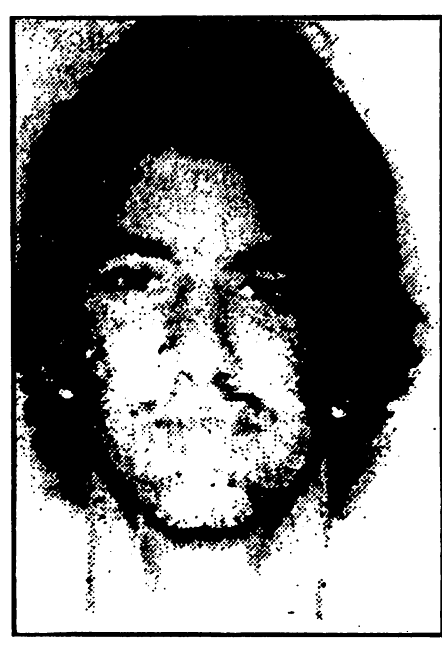
CHARACTER WITNESS: Neighbors called him a "peaceful man, devoted to his family."

★ 48 ★
GEORGE JO HENNARD



Hennard worshipped his big blue truck, cleaning it almost daily. Then again, he hated people more than he loved his truck. Wearing a pair of shades, he crashed the vehicle through an eight-foot plate-glass window at Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen, Texas. He stepped out of its gleaming blue door and screamed, "This is what Bell County has done to me!" to a startled group of feasting Texans. It was Boss's Day, October 16, 1991, and many in the early afternoon crowd were toasting their employers. Choosing his targets with calculated precision, Hennard sauntered up to people and asked, "Was it worth it?" before splashing their innards on the carpet. Using a 9mm Glock 17 and a Luger, he paused only to reload. One Luby's worker hid in the freezer for more than two hours. A dishwasher crawled into his dishwashing machine and huddled there for almost a day. Surrounded by police only a few minutes into his rampage, Hennard shot and killed himself in Luby's restroom. He left twenty-three dead, the largest shooting spree in American history. It was unclear whether anyone in the cafeteria knew him.

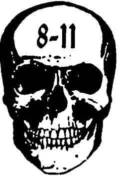


Unemployed, Hennard lived alone in an antebellum mansion in nearby Belton, Texas. He was ejected from the Merchant Marines after kicking a crew member and being caught with reefer. Mysteriously, he had changed his middle name from Pierre to Jo. Paranoid, he was certain his phone was tapped. Neighbors said they often heard him screaming at passersby. He blasted music at all hours and refused to turn down his stereo when neighbors complained. He stalked a pair of girls who lived two blocks away, sending them a five-page letter, driving past their house and waving, and showing up where they worked, silently grinning. Workers at a nearby convenience store recalled that he hated standing in line and once shoved someone at the counter. On the morning of the shooting, though, they said he appeared calmer than usual.

QUOTED (in the letter he sent to the two young women): "Please give me the satisfaction of someday laughing in the face of all those mostly white, treacherous female vipers from two towns who tried to destroy me and my family."



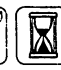
★ 49 ★
CAYETANO & SANTOS HERNANDEZ



Leaders of a murderous cult in Yerba Buena, Mexico, these brothers told villagers in 1963 that the gods would shower them with good fortune when the proper sacrifices were rendered. This meant sex with the Hernandez brothers—Cayetano got the males, Santos the females.

After several spent wads and no increased good fortune for the villagers, the brothers went to Monterrey, Mexico, and found a brother-sister team, Eleazor and Magdalena Solis. Eleazor was a gay male pimp, Magdalena a blonde lesbian hooker. The Hernandez brothers told village farmers that the pair were mountain gods and that sex with them would *ensure* prosperity.

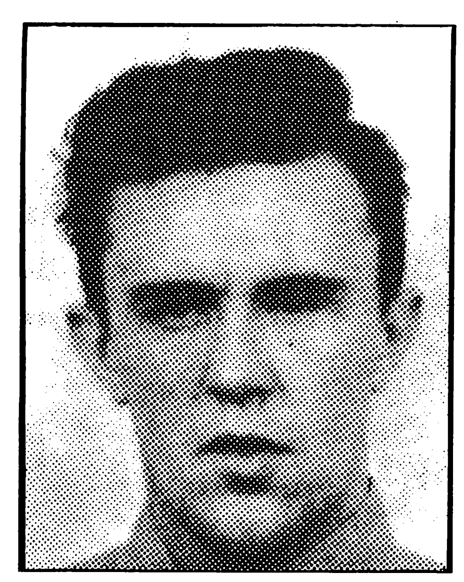
After more cum shots flying through the clear Mexican night, the villagers once again became suspicious. The Hernandez brothers then said that a human sacrifice was in order. Two infidels were pummeled to death, and the villagers drank their blood from bowls. Six others died in the ensuing weeks. A teenaged girl had been sleeping with Magdalena but craved Santos's *salchicha de amor*. Jealous, Magdalena had the girl tied to a cross, knocked her out, and commanded the faithful to beat her to death. They complied and went a step further, burning the girl at the cross. Another disbelieving farmer was murdered with machetes. A frightened boy notified a policeman, and both disappeared. They were later found mutilated, with the cop's heart missing. The cult had fled to a cave, where Santos was shot to death in a gun battle. Cayetano was murdered by a rival cultist, and the rest of their crew was given heavy jail time. The villagers went back to fucking each other and, presumably, various farm animals.

★ 50 ★
RICHARD HICKOCK & PERRY SMITH
"The In Cold Blood Killers"



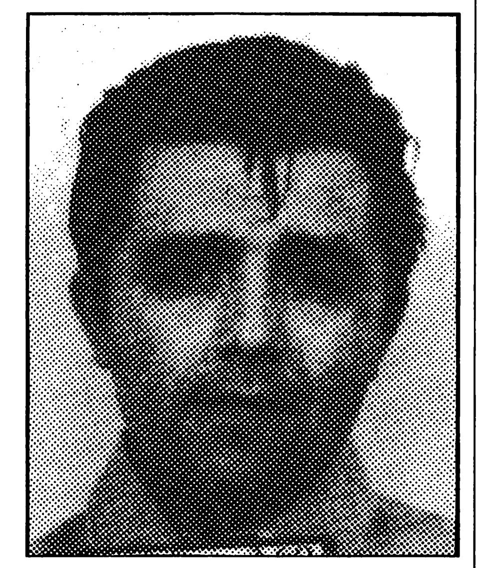
Dick Hickock was a self-assured pederast and former auto mechanic who enjoyed slamming his car into stray dogs. Perry Smith was an emotional, aspirin-gobbling half-breed with bad knees and ballerina's feet. On November 15, 1959, they drove four hundred miles from one side of Kansas to the other, killed all four members of the Clutter family, then drove back, giggling like schoolgirls. They fled to Mexico, then zigzagged back through the States, eventually getting nabbed in Vegas. Police had received a tip from



Hickock: baby-fucking dog-slammer.

Hickock's former cellmate, who had told Dick that the Clutters kept a small fortune stashed in their farmhouse.

Dick and Perry had arrived at the Clutters' wheat farm near midnight. They bound and gagged the family, but Smith, Jerry Lewis to Hickock's condescending Dean Martin, sought to make the victims comfortable. He placed a Clutter male on a mattress box so he wouldn't have to endure the cold cement floor while a shotgun sent his hair flying all over it. Smith later recalled how he felt that his mind had split from his body during the crimes, passively watching himself commit murder. For their troubles, Hickock and Smith netted forty to fifty bucks, not the ten Gs they had expected. They were hanged in April, 1965. Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* rivetingly relates the case's details.



Smith: the considerate killer.

QUOTED (Perry Smith, on the murder of family patriarch Herb Clutter): "I didn't want to harm the man. I thought he was a very nice gentleman. Soft-spoken. I thought so right up to the moment I cut his throat."

★ 51 ★
H.H. HOLMES
"The Torture Doctor"

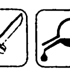


With his waxed mustache and sexy bowler hat, Holmes drew scads of Chicago chicks to his hotel during the 1893 World's Fair. A Gothic, turreted eyesore, the hundred-room "Holmes's Castle" was a labyrinth of secret entrances, trapdoors, and fake walls. Holmes (whose real name was Herman Webster Mudgett) would promise to marry a woman, make her sign over her life's savings, and then treat her to a night of sex. In the morning, he'd chloroform her and throw her down an empty elevator shaft, covering it with a glass lid. He'd wait for her to awake from the chloroform so he could watch her scream and writhe. He then slipped a hose through a hole in the glass lid and filled the shaft with deadly gas. After his prey expired, he'd drop down a noose, lift her up, and send her body careening down a chute leading to the basement. That's where he kept acid vats, surgical tools, various torture devices, and a crematory. Holmes had employed an auto mechanic to peel flesh from the bodies, convincing the poor grease monkey that they had been donated by the city mortuary.



People began to notice that an abnormal percentage of Holmes's tenants were vanishing. An insurance scam related to the death of Holmes's business partner drew Chicago police to the Castle, but H.H. was long gone. They found the former drugstore owner and University of Michigan medical student in Philly, where he was hanged in 1896. After the Castle burned, police said they found the remains of more than two hundred bodies. Did they ever stop to consider that maybe these people hadn't paid their *rent* on time?

QUOTED (when a University of Michigan guard found Holmes dragging a body across the campus and asked what he was doing): "Taking my girl for a walk, you idiot."

★ 52 ★
JAMES OLIVER HUBERTY



FUCK THE QUARTER POUNDER WITH CHEESE, RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!!! On Wednesday afternoon, July 18, 1984, this tall, scowling, string bean of a man drove his black Mercury Marquis (with a bumper sticker which read, "I'm not deaf; I'm just ignoring you") into a McDonald's parking lot in San Ysidro, California. Wearing a black T-shirt and camouflage pants, he entered the burger palace and shouted, "I killed thousands in Vietnam, and I want to kill more!" He placed a radio on the counter so he could hear reports of the impending massacre. Strapped with an Uzi, a shotgun, and a 9mm automatic, he started spraying unwitting junk-food aficionados. Huberty's gunfire blasted through McDonald's windows and into parked cars. A stray bullet even hit a motorist on Interstate 5. He emptied nearly one hundred and forty rounds, leaving the home of Ronald, the Hamburglar, and Mayor McCheese a virtual smoking crater. After an hour and fifteen minutes, a police marksman sent a bullet whizzing through Huberty's chest, killing the crabby gunman. Huberty's rampage accounted for a full twenty percent of the San Diego area's homicides for that year.



But we should feel *sorry* for him. Huberty's mother, a Quaker missionary, had apparently shown more interest in Jesus than in little Jimmy. The boy grew up feeling abandoned. He trained as a funeral director and embalmer before settling into the fast-paced, glamorous life of a security guard. He had been fired from his job a

week prior to his shooting spree.

Huberty lived with his family in an apartment one-half block from the Golden Arches. Neighbors claimed they often heard guns going off in his apartment and described him as the type of guy who never responded when you said, "Hi." He slept with a gun under his pillow and told people his only friend was his dog Shep. He beat his kids and argued constantly with his wife Etna, who herself was once arrested for pointing a gun at neighbors. One of Huberty's daughters told friends that after the family came home from a morning jaunt to the San Diego Zoo, Ma and Pa had a nasty fight. Daddy disappeared, and the rest is fast-food history.

QUOTED (to his wife as he left for McDonald's): "[I'm] going hunting humans."

★ 53 ★ JACK THE STRIPPER "The Thames Nude Murderer"



More obscure and intriguing than the similarly named nineteenth-century hooker-slayer, the Stripper murdered a string of prostitutes near the Thames River in the mid-sixties. Not so interesting, you say? What if I told you that he used his DICK to kill them? Perked up, didn't you? His victims, described as mostly plain and petite, were found with missing front teeth and sperm in their throats. A coroner's examination concluded that they had gagged on the killer's glans penis in the midst of performing fellatio. They died not as the result of blows, but of blow *jobs.* One victim was found with her bloomers stuffed in her mouth. Police found flecks of dried spray paint on a few of the girls' corpses and traced the samples to a shop in London's Notting Hill section. Evidence suggested that the killer took some cadavers to the shop, where he removed their teeth (simulating a vagina) and had his way for weeks with their dead mouths.

London detectives conducted a high-profile "war of nerves" with the anonymous killer. After a primary suspect's van was spotted near a murder scene, the man committed suicide and left a note saying he could no longer bear the strain. He had been a guard whose night rounds included the spray-paint shop. Police never released his name, nor the vital stats about his killer penis.

★ 54 ★ CALVIN JACKSON

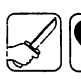


Unlike most serial killers, who waste time and gasoline during endless stalking sessions on city streets and abandoned roadsides, Jackson murdered people in his own apartment building. Crawling in the early seventies with pushers, male hustlers, and old ladies on welfare, Manhattan's Park Plaza Hotel proved an easy place in which to die anonymously. Many of Jackson's victims' bodies weren't found until they were grossly decayed. Several elderly women whom he had suffocated were thought to have died of old age. One cause of death was initially listed as chronic alcoholism. Another murder had been blamed on a lesbian dispute. In an extreme case of bureaucratic bungling, Jackson was even identified by a stabbing victim, but nothing was done about it.

C.J. was a short, squat former junkie and convicted burglar. He had worked for a time as a porter at the hotel. He claimed to have heard voices commanding him to kill old people. All of his victims were middle-aged or doddering females who lived alone, and he raped them all, sometimes post-mortem. After each killing, he went to the victim's fridge and fixed himself a snack, staring at the body for up to an hour. After making sure a victim was dead, he often looted the place.

Jackson was arrested while walking down a fire escape with a stolen TV. His last victim was the only one who wasn't a Park Plaza resident—she lived two doors down. Calvin's photographic memory aided police in their investigation, but he thought he had killed two women who survived his attacks. He was suspected in five additional killings of old women in Buffalo from 1964-'71.

CHARACTER WITNESS: A hotel clerk called him "a quiet guy who never caused any trouble."

★ 55 ★ GENENE JONES



A chubby, bug-eyed Texas nurse who loved babies and resented doctors, Genene Jones once confessed that she cried when she saw *E.T.* She was likewise visibly remorseful during the early eighties when several



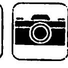
Jim Jones: humongous dick, gargantuan following.

infants passed away under her care. She'd cradle them in her arms, rocking their dead bodies while singing to them. To assure a Christian death, she baptized some by using a syringe to squirt saline solution over them in the sign of the cross. The mother of two wrote love notes to the dead babies in a medical log.

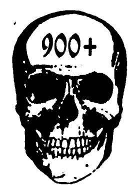
In her notes, she failed to tell the inert cherubs that she had murdered them. Injecting succinylcholine into their little bodies, she rendered them as lax as boiled pasta. Much like Richard Angelo, Jones got off on the thrill, the rush, the *prestige* of Code Blue emergencies, reviving the dying and proving herself competent. She considered herself smarter than doctors and other nurses. By staging a series of baby deaths, she hoped to create the impression of an infant health crisis. That way, they'd have to accept her idea of building a local children's hospital. Maybe they'd even *name* it after her....

QUOTED (when told there weren't enough sick kids to warrant the construction of a pediatric intensive-care unit): "Oh, yes there are. All you have got to do is go out and find them."




★ 56 ★ REVEREND JIM JONES



His dad was a Klansman. His mother once dreamed that she would give birth to a messiah. Born into poverty, Jim Jones played pretend-church as a boy and became a preacher at age twelve. Possibly in reaction to dad's fanaticism, he developed a gospel of socialistic racial integration. After selling pet monkeys for Christ in the 1950s, he founded his first Peoples Temple in Indianapolis, appealing mostly to blacks. In '63, he related a vision of impending nuclear destruction and predicted that Ukiah, California, and Belo Horizonte, Brazil, were the only places which would be left unscathed. In a convoy of vans, Jones and many followers migrated to Ukiah. They relocated to San Francisco in 1970. Viewed as a progressive, Jones received numerous humanitarian awards and became chairman of San Francisco's Housing Authority.

Out of the public eye, Jones was totally *meshuga*. In rituals called "White Nights," he prepared his followers for the act of "revolutionary suicide," a protest against fascism and racism. With the Reverend Jim overseeing, wayward Temple members were publicly paddled. Jones often complained that he was "cursed" with a humongous dick and therefore hounded by female admirers. As possible blackmail, he had sex with male disciples while women photographed. In 1977, an impending article about the cult's abuses drove the Peoples Temple out of the United States and onto some land they had purchased in Guyana. They named their new home "Jonestown."

The San Francisco *Chronicle* reported that in Guyana, Jones had surrounded himself with armed guards, practiced public torture, and continued to rehearse his followers in White Nights. Jones reportedly was sucking three-quarters of a million dollars yearly from his followers' Social Security checks. By late 1978, California Representative Leo Ryan was concerned about the stories and flew with a group of journalists onto a small airstrip six miles from Jonestown. They were greeted by a hostile mob of Temple members. Jones initially refused to see the visitors but relented after aides persuaded him otherwise. Upon their arrival in Jonestown, Ryan and the reporters found what seemed to be a peaceful, harmonious community. Jones, however, resembled a latter-day Elvis: ominous shades, eyeliner-enhanced sideburns, and a constant sweat caused by a high fever. He treated his guests to an ecstatic revival meeting the first night, and Congressman Ryan took the microphone to tell the crowd he was impressed. Zombielike Temple members applauded for twenty minutes.

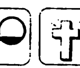
The next day, when bugged by reporters about rumors that commune members weren't permitted to leave, Jones apparently flipped. As the investigative team left, trailed by a family of defectors, Jones sent a squad of assassins after them. As Ryan's group boarded their planes, a man posing as a defector brandished a pistol and started shooting. Jones's gunmen arrived moments later in a tractor-trailer and began firing. They killed Ryan and several others, wounded eight, and then left as suddenly as they had arrived.

Back in Jonestown, commune members were ordered to assemble near the pavilion. A tub was produced, filled with strawberry bug juice laced with tranquilizers and cyanide. Jones ordered the babies brought first. Wailing mothers were forced at gunpoint to squirt the deadly soft drink into their infants' mouths. Next came the older children, who drank from cups, as did the adults. All were forced to lie face-down in rows as blood spurted from their mouths in reaction to the poisoning. Jones, who sat transfixed on a dais during most of the proceedings, finally sent a slug into his diseased brain. Authorities found nearly a million dollars in cash and almost a thousand fetid, bloated bodies under the harsh Guyanese sun. Even Mr. Muggs, Jonestown's mascot monkey, had been shot to death.

An estimated seventy-five cult members escaped through the jungle. Two surviving journalists, one of them dictating from a hospital bed, churned out insta-pulp books on their ordeals. An ad in the *New York Times* touted a smuggled audiotape purportedly containing the sounds of mass suicide.

QUOTED (in his final days to a newsman at Jonestown): "I wish I wasn't born at times. I understand love and hate. They are very close.... I hate power. I hate money.... All I want is peace. I'm not worried about my image. If we could just stop it, stop this fighting. But if we don't, I don't know what's going to happen to twelve hundred lives here."







★ 57 ★ PATRICK W. KEARNEY "The Trash Bag Murderer"

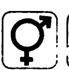


Balding, bespectacled, hard of hearing, and sporting a neatly trimmed beard, Patrick Kearney kept an immaculate Redondo Beach home with his roommate/lover David D. Hill. Neighbors remember the pair as quiet and clean. Kearney was so fastidious that he couldn't



bear to simply drop his victims' dismembered corpses along the highway—he may have been a killer, but he wasn't a *slob*. Instead, he chopped them to pieces and neatly placed them in plastic trash bags, dumping their remains from L.A. to Mexico. From 1968 to 1977, he cruised Hollywood and MacArthur Park for gay male transients. His victims, all of whom were dispatched with a small-caliber gun, ranged in age from five to twenty-eight. Kearney committed some of the murders at his home. Acting on a tip, police searched the house, discovering a bloodstained hacksaw and carpet samples which matched fibers found on a victim. Hill and Kearney had already fled to El Paso, but relatives convinced them to turn themselves in. At a sheriff's information center in Riverside, California, they walked up to a receptionist and pointed to a "WANTED" poster of themselves on the wall. "That's us," Hill said. Hill was later set loose due to insufficient evidence, but Kearney confessed to twenty-eight specific murders and hinted at more than forty. He told an investigator that he liked jail better than military life and reportedly kept a tidy cell.

QUOTED: Kearney said murder "excited [me] and gave [me] a feeling of dominance."

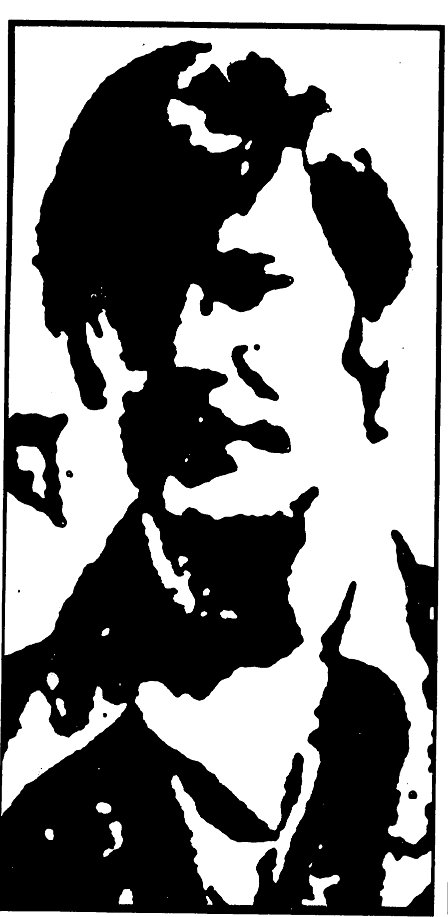


★ 58 ★
ED KEMPER
"The Co-ed Killer"



Ed's mom Clarnell called her son "a real weirdo." She made him sleep in a storage room over an eight-month period when Ed was eight, forcing him to wrangle with childhood's demons alone. Kemper possessed a near-genius IQ but was sensitive around other kids. His sister once teased him by saying that he wanted to kiss his teacher. "If I kissed her, I'd have to kill her first," came his reply, a prophetic utterance from a future necrophile. Ed played various kiddie games with his sister where sis acted as the executioner and Ed "died" by the electric chair or gas chamber. He cut off the hands and feet of a doll sis had been given for Christmas. He buried the family cat alive before chopping off its head, placing it on a stick and muttering a prayer.

Clarnell, fed up with Eddie's weirdness, shipped him off to live with his grandparents during his early teens. In August, 1964, Ed killed grandma with a .22 rifle, stabbing her repeatedly after death. When grandpa came home, Ed shot him on the porch, then calmly called his mother. He told police, "I just wondered how it would feel to shoot grandma." Kemper was declared insane and was sent to California's Atascadero State Hospital. In 1969, against hospital recommendations, he was released and went back to live with mom in Santa Cruz.



Ed was fully grown by now, a six-foot-nine-inch, two-hundred-eighty-pound behemoth. He found a job as a construction-company flagman and spent his spare time poring over detective magazines, snuff films, and John Wayne movies. He collected weapons, his favorite being a grotesquely large hunting knife which he called "The General." He was again subjected to Clarnell's incessant put-downs and petty humiliations. He fantasized about killing her, frequently tiptoeing into her room with a gun as she slept, yet finding himself unable to pull the trigger.

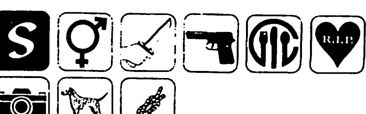
Around 1972, Ed started prowling Northern California's roads for hitchhikers. His first co-ed victims were a pair of female students from Fresno State University. He forced one of them at gunpoint to climb into his trunk. He placed a plastic bag over the other's head, stabbing her in the back and stomach before slitting her throat. Kemper then knifed the woman who was in the trunk and took both girls home, where they were decapitated and buried nearby. His next victim was a dance student, whom he killed and then raped, squirting his love juices into the corpse almost upon contact. He brought her body home and severed her hands and feet, just as he had done to his sister's doll years before. Co-ed number four was shot and taken to Kemper's house, where she was beheaded. He had sex with the cadaver and later axed it to pieces, tossing the remains into the ocean near Carmel. He killed two more co-eds on February 5, 1973, again placing their bodies in his trunk and chopping off their *cabezas*. The next day, while mom was working, Ed washed blood off one of the girls' bodies and fucked the headless corpse.

Clarnell Kemper was right—her son was a real weirdo. Ed sometimes chilled his victims' heads in the refrigerator and buried one girl's head facing his house so he could fantasize that she was watching him. He ate strips of another's leg as part of a macaroni casserole. Ed also snapped Polaroids of his victims and saved their skin and teeth as mementos. In the midst of his spree, he often went to a local bar frequented by off-duty cops, grilling them for details about the murders. During a meeting with a court-appointed psychiatrist, a woman's head rested outside in Ed's trunk. The shrink declared Ed "safe."

It was suggested that Kemper killed women whose voices reminded him of his mom's. On Easter Sunday, 1973, he went straight for the source, whacking Clarnell in the head with a hammer and slitting her throat with The General. He decapitated her and threw her vocal cords, which had berated him since he was a boy, into the garbage disposal. A paradigm of cool, he went to see a friend who owed him ten dollars. Securing his sawbuck, he returned home and invited Clarnell's best friend to dinner. He strangled the woman when she arrived and spent the night in mom's bed. Ed balanced Clarnell's head on a box and used it as a dartboard for several days.

He drove to Colorado and called police from a pay phone, admitting to the Co-ed Killings. He politely waited for cops to arrest him and enthusiastically confessed. Kemper, who claimed to be "terrified of violence," begged for the death penalty. He received a life sentence instead and is now eligible for parole. If he ever gets out, I'd love to give him *my* mother's address.

QUOTED (regarding the punishment he doled out to Clarnell): "That seemed appropriate, as much as she'd bitched and screamed and yelled at me for so many years."



★ 59 ★
ALVIN LEE KING III



On a quiet Sunday morning in the summer of 1980, while the faithful at the First Baptist Church in Daingerfield, Texas, sang "More About Jesus," King broke into the house of worship wearing full military gear and screamed, "THIS IS WAR!" Armed with two rifles and two pistols, he turned the church into a shooting gallery, slaying two men who tried to wrest the guns away from him. Within ten seconds he wounded twelve and murdered three others, including a seven-year-old girl. King fled to a nearby fire station and shot himself in the head, failing to kill himself.



Police found King's wife bound to a kitchen chair. Alvin had six months' worth of food stashed in his basement, showed evidence of a Swiss bank account, and had applied (but was refused) for Soviet citizenship.

An atheist, judo student, and Ph.D. in psychology, King was known around town as an eccentric. He had killed his father in 1966 with a shotgun, but the death was ruled accidental. As a high-school math teacher, he let students cut a

deck of cards to determine their letter grades when they fell in between, say, B and C. He declined to sign a statement of belief in God and refused to teach retarded children, quitting his post to become a trucker.

In the months prior to the shooting, King's twenty-one-year-old daughter had complained to police that dad had forced her to have sex with him over a ten-year period. The case was scheduled to go on trial the day after King's spree. He had asked several First Baptist members to testify as character witnesses. All of them refused, which apparently sparked his rampage. Using a towel, King hanged himself in jail.

QUOTED (on a note found next to his bound wife): "Jeremiah says the King is the King of Kings."

★ 60 ★
PAUL JOHN KNOWLES
"The Casanova Killer"



Upon his release from prison in 1974, P.J. had high hopes. He had been corresponding with a woman he met through an astrology-magazine ad and was scheduled to marry her. But a psychic warned the woman that a threatening man loomed on her horizon. When Knowles's fiancée finally met him in San Francisco, she had butterflies and passed on marriage. Knowles claimed that he murdered three people on the night of his rejection.

For the next four months, using stolen cars and credit cards, he traveled cross-country, a veritable Jack Kerouac of serial killers. He rang doorbells picked at random, then busted into the victim's house with a gun. Knowles strangled most of his prey and choked one woman to death with a sock before fleeing with her TV. He strangled another woman with a telephone cord while her three-year-old son watched. Rape was sometimes involved, though Knowles often lost his erection before finishing the job. Using a stolen cassette recorder, he taped a confession of fourteen murders, gave the tape to his lawyer, and disappeared before he could be apprehended.

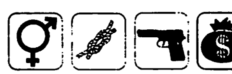
Calling himself "Daryl Golden," he met British journalist Sandy Fawkes in Atlanta. Fawkes found him charismatic and was attracted to his "gaunt good looks." They spent nearly a week together. Knowles proved unable to maintain a stiffie and resorted to fondling himself while performing cunnilingus on Fawkes. When he finally achieved penetration, he couldn't cum. He drew a (hard, erect) gun on Fawkes at one point, and she split soon thereafter. Knowles later attempted to rape one of Fawkes's journalist friends at gunpoint, but the woman escaped.

Back on the road, Knowles kidnapped a cop and another man, handcuffing the pair before blasting them at point-blank range. Pursued by dogs and helicopters, he ran into Georgia woods, where he was held by a shotgun-toting

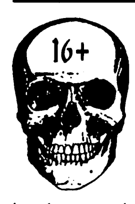


local until police arrived. The next day, after breaking free of handcuffs, the marauding impotent killer was shot dead by an FBI agent.

QUOTED: After his capture, Knowles described himself as "the only successful member of [my] family."

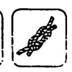
    

★ 61 ★
RANDY STEVEN KRAFT
"The Score Card Killer"



A mild-mannered imp described as a "computer genius," Kraft, along with William Bonin and Patrick Kearney, is part of a long tradition of California homosexual freeway slayers. His contribution to the genre is that he kept a handwritten death list filled with coded references to each victim. From 1971 to 1983, he picked up hitchhikers, got them stoned or drunk, then tortured, hacked, and strangled them to death. He left one victim wrapped around a tree, butane-lighter burns covering his body, his mouth stuffed with dirt, and his genitals missing. All of Kraft's victims were in their late teens or early twenties, and many were Marines. When police stopped him for a traffic violation in May, 1983, they found a strangled leatherneck sitting in the passenger's seat. Prosecutors accused Kraft of forty-five murders but said the toll may have been as high as sixty-five, since his business travels frequently took him to Oregon and Michigan. He was convicted of sixteen slayings. As the killer was being led away after a courtroom hearing, an observer screamed, "Burn in hell, Kraft!"

QUOTED: "I have not murdered anybody, and any reasonable review of the record will show that."

★ 62 ★
PETER KURTEN
"The Monster of Dusseldorf"



Women meant little to Peter Kurten, but the sight of blood made him cum. With a knife serving as a surrogate schlong, he stabbed his victims until he reached orgasm. He often drank their blood after murdering them, quaffing one woman's plasma until he vomited. The sound of trickling blood was music to his ears. When sentenced to die by the guillotine, Kurten told a psychiatrist that he eagerly anticipated hearing the blood burbling from his neck.

As a child, Kurten lived with twelve other family members in one room. He frequently witnessed his parents' lovemaking. His alcoholic father abused the kids and served time for molesting Kurten's sister. Many of Kurten's siblings eventually turned to alcohol. Peter turned to murder.

He drowned two boys in a boating incident when he was nine. Around the same time, a dogcatcher in his apartment building taught him how to masturbate animals and break off their tails. Kurten became a squirrel-strangler when he was a teen, achieving orgasm in the act. He also sodomized sheep and goats, knifing the beasts during penetration.

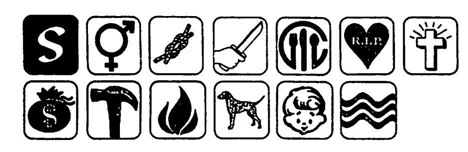
Kurten was in prison almost constantly from 1905 to 1921. He attempted to walk the straight and narrow upon his release, but his gargantuan libido and unbridled sadism eventually consumed him. Using hammers, knives, scissors, axes, and sometimes his own hands and teeth, he vampirized countless citizens in Weimar Germany. Despite his obvious brutality, he wasn't a torturer and often rendered victims unconscious before killing them. Amazingly, some females who survived his stranglings were willing to date him again. A woman he had set free after a rape attempt sent police a letter describing what had happened. She botched the address, though, and the damning missive landed in the dead-letter office. The Monster of Dusseldorf was finally arrested after being identified by another rape survivor.

No one close to Kurten, including his wife, suspected the sharp dresser and churchgoer of such unspeakable acts. Showing no remorse, he recounted seventy-nine crimes with brutal clarity. A shrink who examined him said that Kurten experienced a sense of achievement



through mutilation and murder. Kurten's head was removed in 1931, the blood gurgling from his neck in a way that could only make him proud.

QUOTED: "I used to stroll at night through the Hofgarten very often, and in the spring of 1930 I noticed a swan sleeping at the edge of the lake. I cut its throat. The blood spurted up, and I drank from the stump and ejaculated."



★ 63 ★ LEONARD LAKE & CHARLES NG



A Northern California survivalist certain that World War III was just around the corner, Lake lived on a remote ranch which he remodeled into a torture chamber and snuff-film studio. Aided by Charles Ng, a martial-arts expert and former Marine, Lake was ready to enact "Operation Miranda" as soon as the H-bombs fell. He planned to build underground bunkers, stocking them with mindless, slavering females. "The perfect woman is totally controlled," he wrote in his diary, "a woman who does exactly what she is told and nothing else."

Operation Miranda unraveled in June, 1985, when Ng flubbed a shoplifting attempt at a Bay Area hardware store. He dropped a stolen vise in Lake's trunk and ran away, leaving Lenny to fend with police. Arrested for possessing a gun with a silencer, Lake swallowed a cyanide pill while in custody. Ng fled to Canada, where he was arrested (didn't he learn?) for shoplifting.

When police searched Lake's foothills ranch, they uncovered what amounted to, as one investigator put it, "a truckload of bones." Many of the victims were apparently dismembered with power saws and cremated. Others had been boiled down to a stewlike consistency before being dumped in bags. Within a concrete bunker, police found a whip, handcuffs, a muzzle, and a cell with a one-way mirror looking in. A "buried treasure" map drawn by Lake was presumably a guide to victims' bodies. His diary was filled with phrases such as, "Death is in my pocket and fantasy my goal."

The most startling discovery was that of a series of snapshots and videotapes depicting Lake and Ng torturing a procession of heavily shackled women. Crude footage featured the disembodied voice of cleanliness freak Lake instructing women to shower before submitting to sex with Ng. Females were commanded to beg for forgiveness for unnamed sins. They were then murdered. Photographs showed Lake, who was said to have attended a weekly Bible class, wearing witchlike robes and performing arcane rituals.



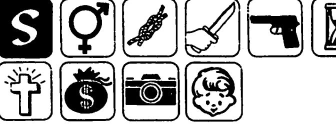
Charles Ng: snuff-film stud.

Lake's first victim was thought to be his brother Don. Videotaped evidence led police to believe that he also murdered four people who lived in the property adjoining his. Lake and Ng lured others to their cabin through classified ads. Men were used for cars and credit cards, and Lake's diary suggested that he hunted some of them for sport. Women fulfilled the pair's domination fantasies.

Curiously, it was Lake's mother who had encouraged him as a boy to take pictures of naked girls. The spawn of alcoholic lineage on both sides of his family, Lake lived at one point under a strict, militaristic grandfather. Fuse these experiences with a tour of duty in Vietnam, and you have the makings of a sexual psycho *par excellence.* The former dope dealer, volunteer fireman, and 4-H Club member died four days after eating the cyanide pill. Charles Ng spent the remainder of the eighties in a Canadian jail and was recently extradited to California, where he awaits trial.

QUOTED (from Lake's diary): "If you love something, let it go. If it doesn't come back, hunt it down and kill it."

CHARACTER WITNESS: A former cohabitant on a California commune called Lake "The most pleasant unpleasant man I have ever known."



★ 64 ★ BRUCE LEE



A deformed epileptic pyromaniac, Lee said his tingling fingers indicated that he would soon commit arson. His given name was George Peter Dinsdale, but he legally changed it as a homage to the feline Kung Fu star. He set his first fire in 1969 at age nine and claimed his first fatality four years later. He took out eleven men at an old-age home in 1977. After arguing with a man about Lee's having teased some pigeons, he strangled the birds and set the old geezer aflame while the man slept in a chair. British police interrogated an estimated eighteen thousand persons in connection with the fires. A victim's background led them to question some lavatory homosexuals, one of whom was Lee. He confessed with almost no prodding and was sent to an asylum in 1980. It's such a shame—we could have used him during the L.A. riots!

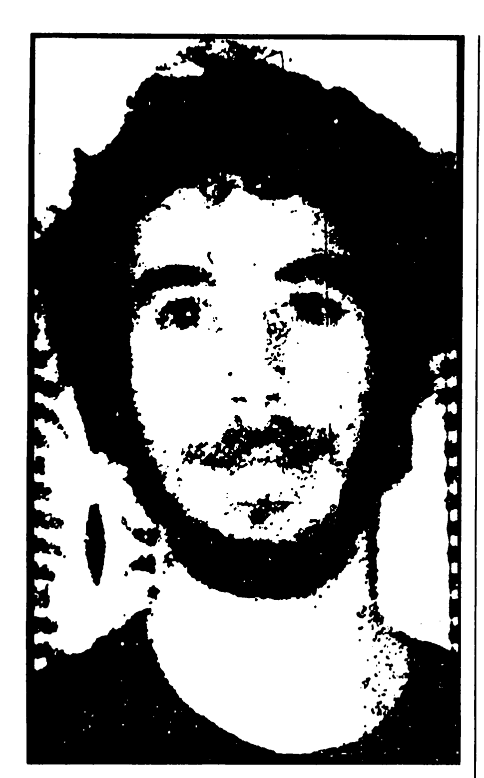
QUOTED: "I am devoted to fire. Fire is my master, and that is why I cause these fires."



★ 65 ★ MARC LEPINE "The Man who Hated Women"



He loved guns. He was often found hovering around the rifle racks at a sporting-goods store near his Montreal apartment, grinning like a kid in a candy store. Though a fan of war movies, he was rejected from



the Canadian armed forces for "asocial" behavior.

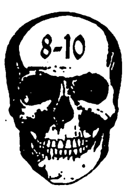
He despised chicks. Clad in hunting clothes, with bullets slung across his chest and a Ruger rifle in one arm, he entered the Ecole Polytechnique near the end of 1989's fall semester, setting off a twenty-minute spree which became Canada's worst mass murder. He shot and killed one female student, then busted into an engineering class as someone gave a lecture on heat transfer and screamed, "I want the women!" He told the males to go into the hall. Students thought it was a prank, but after the men filed out, Lepine pumped a round into the ceiling and hollered, "You're all a bunch of feminists! I hate feminists!" He killed six women in the class and then stalked the hallways, grinning. According to a witness, it wasn't a deranged smile—it was more "like he was having a good time." He murdered three women in a cafeteria and four on another floor. Lepine then turned the rifle on himself, splattering his cerebrum all over the school he had once desired to attend. He left a suicide note which complained about feminism and mysteriously listed fifteen female Quebecois socialites.

Lepine was born Gamil Gharbi. His abusive father left the family when the boy was seven. His mother, whose maiden name was Lepine, testified at divorce proceedings that Marc's dad believed "women are servants to men." Marc legally adopted his mother's surname at age eighteen. Neighbors remembered an introvert who blared music at all hours. One recalled hearing him wildly laughing night after night, presumably alone.

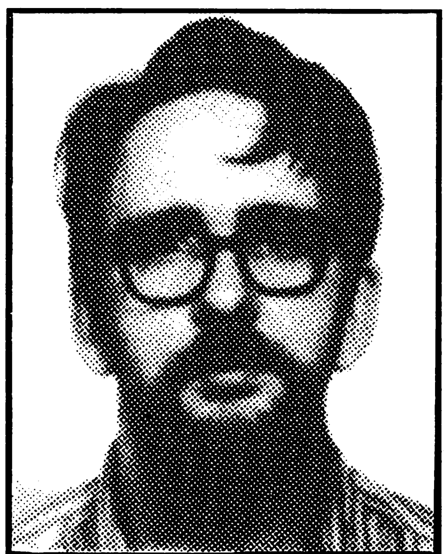
CHARACTER WITNESS: A friend's mother described Lepine as a "shy, withdrawn man who was always polite and sweet."



★ 66 ★ GARY & THADDEUS LEWINGDON "The .22-Caliber Killers"

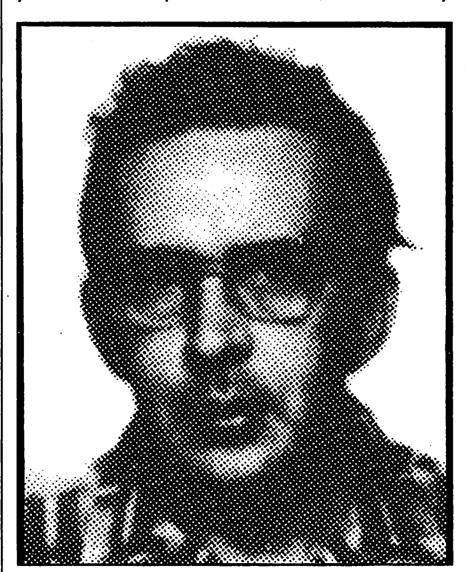


For most of 1978, the Lewingdon brothers petrified Columbus, Ohio, residents with a string of nighttime home-invasion slayings. As described by Gary's wife Delaine, Thaddeus Lewingdon had a "ferocious appetite" after he murdered, chowing down with abandon while his brother sulked. Gary was abducted when he tried to use a victim's credit card. Both brothers were handed multiple life sentences. Thaddeus pleaded with the judge to give him enough sodium pentothal to kill himself. The request was denied, and Tad was later sent to a mental institution after a psychotic jailhouse episode.



Tad Lewingdon: hungry after killing.

None of this is brain-peelingly interesting, except for one fact. Claudia Yasko, a twenty-six-year-old schizophrenic waitress, had initially confessed to the murders in convincing detail and was arrested. Her testimony became suspect when the killings continued after her imprisonment. Claudia had overheard her boyfriend and Gary Lewingdon planning one of the murders. After the slaying, her beau somehow convinced her to visit the scene and scour the joint for dope. Claudia got confused and confessed. The brain-addled coffee-pourer might still be incarcerated if Gary Lewingdon had been smart enough not to use that credit card.



Gary Lewingdon: cash or charge?

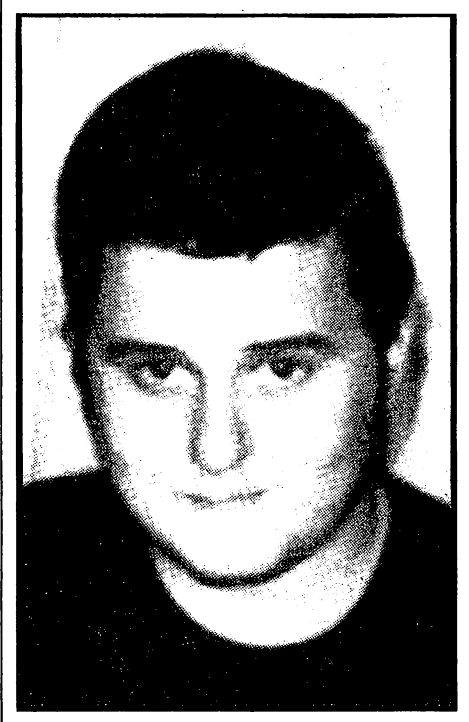





★ 67 ★ BOBBY JOE LONG "The Classified-Ad Rapist"



Allegedly a distant cousin of Henry Lee Lucas, Bobby suffered from the same gender misidentification as his more famous relative. Like Henry Lee, he experienced repeated head trauma as a child. Like Henry Lee, his earliest memories are violent—after his parents divorced, Bobby's dad raped his mother at knifepoint. Bobby slept with his mom until age thirteen, and like Henry Lee, he claimed that momma forced him to watch her having sex with various partners. *Unlike* Henry Lee Lucas, Bobby Joe Long had tits.



The victim of a fucked-up endocrine system, Long developed six pounds of breast tissue when he reached puberty. An operation eventually excised the unwanted knockers. After incurring brain damage in a motorcycle accident, he was prone to hypersexuality, lusting after every woman he saw and reaching orgasm at least five times daily. He also began spanking

his mother on occasion, and she was said to have offered little resistance. The bike accident also left Long with a volcanic temper, and he wandered around in a constant hangover, ultra-sensitive to the most trifling noise. An insatiable hunger for LSD and weed aided his mental decline.

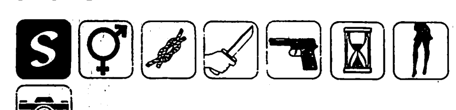
As Fort Lauderdale's Classified-Ad Rapist, he was thought to have attacked over fifty housewives, most of whom were hawking used goods through local newspapers. He murdered no one during this phase and later boasted that many of his prey seemed to enjoy his brutal advances.

Beset with a pathological hatred of prostitutes, he began to cruise Tampa's red-light district, accosting streetwalkers and nude dancers. He bound, raped, and strangled most of them, burying their bodies on the outskirts of town. Obsessed with domination, he sometimes placed a leash on his victims before disposing of their remains. He'd then fall into a slumber which lasted half a day or more, awaking unsure of whether or not he had killed. He sometimes had to check the newspapers to verify his suspicions.

After torturing a donut clerk for over a day, he set her free when he realized she didn't fit the slutty stereotype of his other victims. Desiring to get caught, he drove around for hours with his last victim's body, even stopping to get gas.

Long was arrested in 1983 and received the death penalty. In prison, he claims to experience monthly mood swings which mimic a menstrual cycle. He says he becomes a real bitch when the moon is full.

QUOTED: "I know what I did. I raped and murdered them. But they were the ones who offered the invitation.... What kills me most is that the girls that I raped were all dope addicts and whores. Not that anybody really deserves to get killed, but they weren't saints.... After I'm dead, they're going to open up my head and find that, just like we've been saying, a part of my brain is black and dry and dead. But they're not going to give a fuck."





★ 68 ★ GANG LU



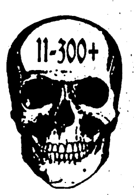
Specializing in space-plasma theory, Chinese-born Lu impressed University of Iowa physics professors as a brilliant Ph.D. student with a limitless future. But they weren't impressed enough to give him a twenty-five-hundred-dollar prize for his dissertation, awarding it to another Chinese student instead. On a snowy afternoon late in 1991, Lu fatally shot three dissertation-committee professors, a university staffer, and his award-winning rival before killing himself. His spree lasted ten minutes, during which he uttered not a word, letting a .38 snub-nosed revolver elicit streams of earth plasma.

Lu was known around campus as a temperamental crybaby who pestered female students with unrequited displays of affection. Ironically, he had previously roomed with his rival, but the man proved unable to bear Lu's tantrums. Lu had named all but one of his victims in five letters—four in English, one in Chinese—which he had given to friends to be mailed to news bureaus. Lu's rampage came less than three weeks after George Jo Hennard's record-breaker. The most unsettling thing about it was that, a week previously, at a minimum of six Northeastern schools, rumors had circulated of an imminent mass murder on a college campus.

CHARACTER WITNESS: A professor called Lu "extremely bright and capable."



★ 69 ★ HENRY LEE LUCAS & OTTIS TOOLE



As a boy, the only thing little Henry Lee Lucas loved was his pet mule. His mother Viola sensed this. She asked Henry if he loved it. He said yes, so she killed it with a shotgun. Then she mercilessly clubbed Henry for the cost incurred in removing its dead body.

The son of an alcoholic prostitute and a legless Virginia whisky-runner, Henry Lee Lucas was born without much hope during the Great Depression. Viola Lucas barbarized both Henry and his father, until one night the old man could take no more and hauled himself out onto a snowbank. He caught pneumonia and later died in what was probably an act of self-inflicted euthanasia.

Viola's savage attacks on her son continued, often with a wooden two-by-four to Henry's skull. She once beat him into a coma, leaving him with severe damage to his brain's violence center. To make things worse, she forbade him the luxury of crying. If he did, she beat him again with doubled intensity. To quash any possibility of his having a normal social life, she permed his hair and sent the shoeless, unwashed boy to school in girl's clothing for nearly three years.

While Henry ferreted amid garbage cans for his dinner, Viola cooked hot meals for herself and her johns. She forced Henry to watch while she serviced tricks. Upon finishing, many customers beat Viola and her son. Once, after a trick pulled out, Viola blasted the man in the leg with a shotgun, the blood showering over Henry. One of Viola's lovers lingered long enough to teach Henry the joys of bestiality.

It's little wonder that Henry started drinking at ten years old. He formed a homosexual relationship with his brother, who "accidentally" gouged out Henry's left eye with a knife. Viola let the eye shrivel until it had to be replaced with a glass one, giving Lucas his trademark half-dead stare. Henry dropped out of school in the fifth grade and did time at age thirteen for auto theft. He says he took his first life at fourteen or fifteen, slaying a girl who deflected his fumbling come-on.



Lucas: poster boy for child abuse.

By his early twenties, he had settled into marriage in Michigan, finally escaping his mother's clutches—he thought. Viola visited him in a bar, and as she assaulted him with another verbal barrage, he choked and stabbed her to death. Henry recalls hitting Viola and raping her dead body, but he claims no memory of killing her.

He received a forty-year sentence, serving the first six years in an asylum and another eight in prison. He repeatedly attempted suicide while incarcerated and says he underwent a long period of disorientation where he heard Viola's voice commanding him to kill. He pleaded with prison authorities not to release him upon his 1970 parole, but they forced him out. Lucas claims to have slain someone within a few hundred yards of the gates.

A hardened predator, he drifted across the South, subsisting on junk food, alcohol, and five packs of cigarettes a day. Since he killed all ages and both genders in various ways, he confounded police with his lack of a consistent M.O. Many of his victims were female hitchhikers along dusty stretches of I-35 in Texas. Replicating his mother's cruelty, Henry told his prey in explicit terms what he was going to do to them, then made them watch as he hacked off their fingers and toes or burned their genitals with a cigarette. He says he had sex with dismembered human body parts and animals both dead and alive. In a semi-stupor, he once drove around for three days accompanied by a rotting human head. Despite his severe sadism, he says murder depressed him and that he couldn't bear knowing his victims' names. He self-righteously claims to have never robbed his prey.



Toole: creepy male prostitute.

In 1976, he met Ottis Elwood Toole in a Florida soup kitchen. A tall, subhuman male hooker with an IQ tested at seventy-five, Ottis's background was uncannily similar to Henry's: physical and sexual abuse, a mother who dressed him as a girl (and later died at his hands), youthful pyromania, and hardcore alcoholism. Like Henry, Ottis was a traveling serial killer, having slayed at random while roaming the West in a pickup truck during the mid-seventies. But Ottis added a few wrinkles of his own, not the least of which were cannibalism and Satanism. (Toole's grandmother had labeled him "the devil's child.") Over the next six-and-a-half years, the drawling Southerners teamed to become the Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn of serial murder.

Allegedly linked with the "Hand of Death," a Mexico-based Satanic cult, Toole engaged Lucas in procuring bodies for cash. Ottis was also Henry's sometime lover. When Lucas indulged the occasional hetero yearning, Toole reportedly slaughtered gays in fits of jealous retribution.

Henry grew infatuated with Becky Powell, Toole's pre-pubescent niece. He adopted the girl and became her common-law husband, even though he was more than thirty years her senior. The unlikely lovers meandered cross-country and halfway back, landing in a Texas Christian commune. In 1982, fed up with Christ, they again set out on the road. While camping in the desert, Becky slapped Henry during an argument. He stabbed her to death, raped her, cut her body into pieces, stuffed the parts in pillowcases, and dumped his dismembered sweetheart in a field. Deeply remorseful for killing the only woman he had ever loved, Henry often returned to the field and spoke to Becky's body parts. He also returned to the commune, eventually murdering octogenarian Granny Rich, slicing an upside-down cross between her breasts and copulating her carcass.

Texas authorities arrested Lucas on gun charges in June, 1983. A routine search uncovered human bones in his trash. Suspected in Granny Rich's murder, he was brought before a judge. Henry admitted to killing Granny, offhandedly adding, "I got at least a hundred more out there." He subsequently claimed responsibility for up to six hundred murders throughout the US, Canada, Europe, and Asia, even boasting of having supplied Jim Jones with his killer cyanide. Though he forgot whole periods of his life, he remembered murder details with microscopic clarity. On Florida's death row, Ottis convincingly corroborated many of Henry's claims. Police nationwide ceased investigations of two hundred and ten murders on the strength of Lucas's confessions, despite the fact that many of his statements were contradictory or required him to have been several places at once. The mercurial murderer then claimed to have killed only one person, his mother. Investigators still say they believe Henry and Ottis were responsible for at least a hundred slayings.

Eventually convicted of eleven murders, Henry Lee Lucas awaits the death penalty in Texas, his brain corroded from beatings and substance abuse, his body emitting a foul stench from lifelong cadmium poisoning. He is said to have found Jesus. His mother predicted that he would die in jail.

The film *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* chronicles a short span of Lucas and Toole's relationship, though it takes liberties with the facts, as it shows Henry killing Ottis and portrays Becky's character as a full-grown mother who shampoos customers at a Chicago hair salon. Maybe it was supposed to be an "adaptation," like those *Macbeth*-in-a-swimming-pool things you see all the time in L.A. It's still highly recommended, and along with *The Honeymoon Killers* is one of the best murder films ever made.

QUOTED (Henry): "I hated all of my life. I hated everybody.... I was bitter at the world. I hated everything. There wasn't nothin' I liked. I was bitter as bitter could be.... I had nothing but pure hatred. Killing someone is just like walking outdoors. If I wanted a victim, I'd just go get one. I didn't even consider a person a human being."

CHARACTER WITNESS (Sister Clemmie, Henry's jail minister): "He is one of the gentlest and most loving Christian persons I have ever known."

CHARACTER WITNESS: The manager of a Florida roofing company which employed both Lucas and Toole called Ottis "a good worker."



★ 70 ★ JEFFREY LUNDGREN

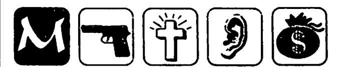


Described as a "spiritual bully," this fat, greasy Sam Kinison look-alike led the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, which, despite the name, is not affiliated with the Mormons. In 1984, he shepherded a flock of six families to a fifteen-acre farmhouse in rural Ohio. He wielded total control, taking his followers' paychecks and eavesdropping on their phone conversations. A typical psycho-religious tyrant, he beat misbehaving children with poles, engaged the men in paramilitary drills, and jerked off while naked female cult members danced for his amusement.

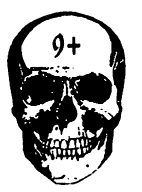
Claiming to be a prophet, he said he had special access to God—sort of a spiritual Gold Card—and that only he could interpret the scriptures. One of his prophecies was that the Lord demanded a blood sacrifice before he would deliver Lundgren's group to the Promised Land. Lundgren never specified where the Promised Land *was*, but it almost certainly wasn't Cleveland.

Suspicious that his followers in the Avery family lacked sufficient faith, Lundgren decided to offer their bodies as supplication to Jehovah. Lundgren and his agents bound Mr. and Mrs. Avery and their three teenaged daughters with tape, threw them in a pit beneath his barn, and shot them one by one. A cult member used a chain saw to mask the sounds of gunfire. The biggest insult was that Lundgren had used the Averys' credit card to purchase the guns which killed them. Lundgren's cult buried the Averys in a mass grave and fled the farm, but not before thoughtfully opening a big bag of food for their cats.

Lundgren and his family were found with a mini-arsenal of guns at a National City, California, hotel. Nineteen-year-old Damon Lundgren was convicted of four murders, and Mrs. Lundgren received five consecutive life terms. Big Jeff was handed the death penalty, his credit line with God apparently having reached its limit.



★ 71 ★ CHARLES MANSON
"The Most Dangerous Man Alive"



Charlie. Chuck. Chuckles. Chas. No other "murderer" has been as deified or vilified as Manson, yet there's no proof that he ever killed anyone. The fear he inflicts is that of his ability to control others. Had his family background been different, this spellbinding shrimp might have been super-agent Mike Ovitz or a chairman at Chrysler.

When Manson was paroled in 1967 after serving nearly seven years for pimping, he found a world radically different from the Eisenhower era's hard jaws and greasy kid stuff. He made his way to Haight-Ashbury just in time for the Summer of Love. Abundant dope! Loose women! He dropped his first acid at a Dead concert, wowing audience members with his interpretive-dance prowess before fainting on the floor. Manson's pimping abilities were not lost on the anarchic milieu, and he soon drew



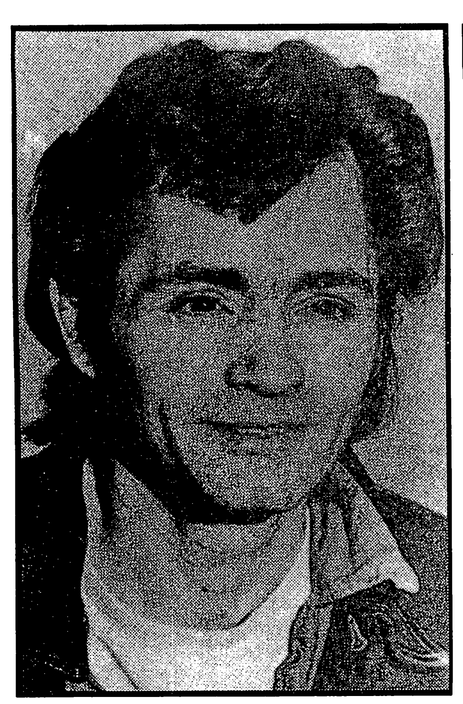


alienated youth eager to swallow philosophy and cum from the little guy with the beard.

His brain reeling with power and LSD 25, Charlie concocted theories at once insane and oddly seductive. His most pervasive doctrine—that people should do what makes them happy, regardless of outside forces—is as harmless and logical as zillions of self-help books. It was his more, shall we say, *esoteric* teachings which got him in trouble. Chief among these was his belief in an imminent race war which blacks would win. According to Charlie, by the time that the victorious Africans realized they were incapable of governing, the Manson family's pure white seed would have multiplied to over a hundred thousand Aryan zealots. The Manson clan would rise to world dominance, with Charlie as their leader. The family secured the Barker Ranch near Death Valley, a "bottomless pit" where they planned to hide and breed after the racial Armageddon.

If we are to trust Manson prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi, Charlie came to these beliefs through an imaginative interpretation of The Beatles' *White Album*, particularly the song "Helter Skelter." Manson is probably as well-known as Mother Theresa, but few know that he was a musician. He learned to play the guitar while behind bars and gave concerts in various San Francisco dives after his 1967 release. (I'd KILL for a tape!) He even penned a song which The Beach Boys, of all groups, recorded. The Manson family waxed their own album called *Lie*, an incredibly depressing sonic mix of Hank Williams and the Velvet Underground. Instead of Satanism, drugs, or unbridled promiscuity, it may have been frustrated musicianship which fueled the Tate-LaBianca slayings: Only months before the murders, Tate's house had been occupied by Terry Melcher, a record-industry insider who hadn't pushed Manson's career to Charlie's satisfaction. In contrast with the widely held notion that the "Helter Skelter" murders were a random onslaught against Middle America, it's conceivable that the family was aiming for Terry, unaware that he had moved.

In fact, the family's first confirmed victim was music teacher Gary Hinman, who was found dead in his home on July 31, 1969. On one wall were the words POLITICAL PIGGY, written in Hinman's blood. On August 9, police found the bodies of actress Sharon Tate and four others in Tate's Bel Air home. The actress had been pregnant at the time of her murder, and the words WAR and PIG were found scrawled in her blood. Accompanied by Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel, and Linda Kasabian, Charles "Tex" Watson had burst into Tate's house near midnight, yelping, "I am the devil, and I have come to do the devil's work!" Leslie Van Houten joined Tex and his girls the next night at the L.A. residence of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca, where the couple was repeatedly stabbed and the words DEATH TO PIGS, RISE, and HEALTER SKELTER [sic] were finger-painted on the walls. Manson associate Shorty Shea was found dead two weeks later, hacked to bits at the hands of Mansonites Bruce Davis and Steve Grogan. Charlie's army was also thought to have perpetrated a string of unsolved murders during the late sixties.



A younger Charlie. Very happy.

The family wasn't linked to the Tate-LaBianca slayings until October, 1969. Three of the accused girls wanted to plead guilty and exonerate Manson, but their defense lawyers refused. The prosecution, alleging that Charlie was the puppeteer, called him "one of the most evil, Satanic men who ever walked the face of the earth." Manson and several family members were handed death sentences, which were later commuted to life terms. Charlie now sits in a seven-by-thirteen-foot cell at Corcoran State Prison. He has become a role model for disaffected youth worldwide, the Elvis of alienation.

But if he is a master of "evil," whatever the fuck *that* means, he had good teachers. His mother, Kathleen Maddox, was a teenaged alcoholic bisexual prostitute who regarded her son as a nuisance. The name "Manson" was grafted from one of her lovers, though the man probably wasn't the boy's father; in fact, Charlie was listed as "no-name Maddox" on his Cincinnati birth records. According to a possibly apocryphal story, Maddox once sold Charlie for a pitcher of beer, only to have him returned. She was imprisoned for armed robbery when Charlie was five, and the boy was sent to live with his religious-nut aunt and uncle. Like Henry Lee Lucas, Manson was forced to attend school dressed as a girl and often had to eat from garbage cans. His mother was paroled and reclaimed Charlie when he was eight, only to expose him to her drunken sex romps with strangers. She finally turned him over to the state's "care" when he was twelve.

He was whipped at a Catholic boys' home for wetting his bed. He was gang-raped at fifteen in a reform school while a guard watched, masturbating. He was incorrigibly embittered by the time he reached adulthood, a full-fledged criminal involved in theft, pimping, drug dealing, and possibly contract murder. He had spent roughly half his life in jails and reform schools at the time of his 1967 parole. Charlie begged prison officials not to release him. They should have listened. Then again, I'd only have ninety-nine murderers, wouldn't I?

QUOTED: "These children that come at you with knives, they are your children. You taught them. I didn't teach them. I just tried to help them stand up."



★ 72 ★ BARRY WAYNE McNAMARA



On a Saturday night in January, 1985, McNamara shot his father, sister, and niece, then crushed his mother's skull with a giant rock. Shortly after the murders, he surrendered to police at the family ranch near Santa Barbara. No one was sure what caused him to explode. Some said it was jealousy, since Barry was a lowly electronics technician while his father was a successful inventor. Others whispered that his family had been needling the five-foot-eight, two-hundred-eighty-pounder about his weight.

McNamara put all the rumors to rest, explaining that he was the "illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth the Second" and that the TV commanded him to commit the murders because his parents were Soviet spies.



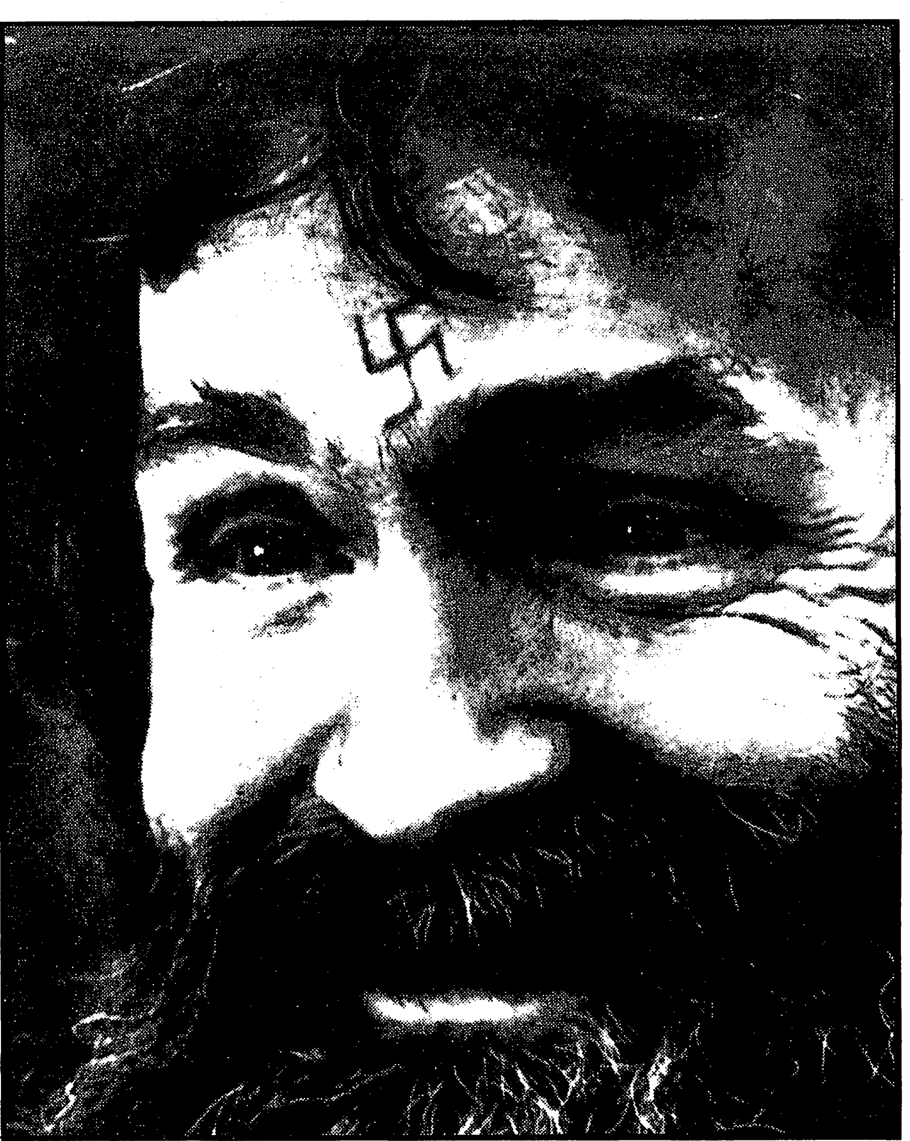




★ 73 ★ BENJAMIN FRANKLIN MILLER "The Bra Killer"



A postal clerk who preached to others as he sorted mail, Miller was described by a co-worker as a would-be Billy Graham and a loner. Sensitive and likely to erupt at the smallest instigation, he was routed from white



An older Charlie. Even happier.



churches for his unsavory displays of fanaticism. The grizzled Tim Conway look-alike began attending black churches, although he shouted and mewled his religious oatmeal on several Stamford, Connecticut, street corners. It was there that he met his prey, black hookers and junkies who would probably fall under the Christian definition of "sinners." Of his five murder victims, he strangled at least three of them with their bras, the undergarments which harnessed their dirty, filthy sexuality. After signing out of a psychiatric ward in 1972, the married father of a twelve-year-old girl (training bra?) was arrested. One can only fantasize about what he would have done with Madonna and her *bustier*.

★ 74 ★ HERBERT MULLIN



Don't you hate it when people play "echo" with you, annoyingly repeating your every word and gesture until you want to smack them? Herbert Mullin's family hated it when he did it at the dinner table. By the late sixties, their acid-dropping, yoga-practicing son was acting like such a jackass, they convinced him to commit himself. Antipsychotic medications he received at the hospital didn't seem to help, for he signed scores of letters "a human sacrifice, Herb Mullin" and sent them to people he had never met. An undoubted influence on performance artists, Mullin also heard voices urging him to shave his head and burn his dick with a lit cigarette.

He continued to hear voices upon his release, but these emanated from people he met at random, pleading with Mullin to kill them. Herb happily obliged, clubbing his first victim with a baseball bat. The next person who asked to be killed was a female college student, whom he eviscerated. The product of a stiflingly Catholic background, Mullin felt guilty and confessed to a priest, who astonishingly requested that Herb kill him. Mullin complied, then hunted down the dope dealer who had introduced him to pot. Feeling remorseful for damaging Herb's mind, the man asked Mullin to murder him, as did four other people who shared the man's cabin. A few weeks later, Herb collared four boys who had been camping without a permit and gave them a thorough tongue-lashing. Wracked with sorrow, they asked that he shoot them, and he did. His final victim was a man who was toiling in a garden. Weary of weed-pulling and manure-spreading, he expressed his desire to Mullin that someone would come along and plant a bullet in him. Herb granted the favor, but the police ended his mission of mercy in 1973.



With big tadpole eyes, Mullin told police that his murders stopped a calamitous earthquake from destroying California. They ignored his explanation, and Herb was given two life sentences. They'll be sorry when the Big One hits, won't they?

QUOTED: "Satan gets into people and makes them do things they don't want to."

CHARACTER WITNESS: Herb's high-school class voted him "Most Likely to Succeed."

★ 75 ★ DALE MERLE NELSON



A depressive British Columbian lumberjack, Nelson suffered from the occasional limp dick and hid his shame through alcoholic binges. On September 5, 1970, he spent twelve hours getting snockered on a ghastly mix of beer, wine, and hard liquor. He drove to a house where his wife's relatives lived, bludgeoned Shirley Wasyk to death, strangled her seven-year-old daughter, and orally copulated a third girl. A fourth ran for assistance. Suffering from munchies, Nelson opened up the dead seven-year-old girl's guts with a knife, stuck his face in her entrails, and gulped down some half-digested food. His midnight snack having hit the spot, he fled the scene and knocked on the door of a nearby farm. Nelson shot the family patriarch as he opened the door, then smoked the man's wife and four children, sodomizing an eight-year-old girl as she was in her death throes. After killing eight people within an hour, he boldly returned to the Wasyk house *after* police had been there to remove the girl from whose guts he had dined.

Authorities arrested him a day-and-a-half later, and he was given life imprisonment. He claims to hallucinate mosquitoes, dogs, and a Japanese woman in his cell. The worst part of his confinement is that he's forced—ugh!—to eat jail food.

QUOTED: "It must have been the LSD."

CHARACTER WITNESS: Acquaintances described Nelson as "a regular guy."

★ 76 ★ EARLE LEONARD NELSON "The Gorilla Murderer"



A self-described "very religious man of high ideals," Earle Nelson drifted across the US in the mid-1920s, gripping a Bible in his oversized hands. From boarding house to boarding house, he impressed landladies with his fervent gaze and clean-living

demeanor. After impressing them, he'd strangle them, rape their lifeless bodies, mutilate them, and stuff them under his newly rented bed. He once slept three nights with a victim tucked beneath him. After killing a Kansas City landlady and her eight-month-old daughter, he raped the tiny infant's corpse. His cruelty knowing no bounds, he even stole one victim's Bible. He was abducted in Canada and hanged in 1928.



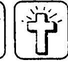
Nelson's mother had died of VD when Earle was nine months old. The boy was sent to live with his psychotically religious aunt. She trained him to be a minister, and Nelson came to believe that he resembled Christ. He experienced head trauma when a trolley car dragged him fifty feet, his skull bouncing like a basketball. Using the name Roger Wilson, he married in 1919. He frequently berated his wife, publicly calling her a whore. He finally caused the poor woman to crack, and she was committed. He raped her in a hospital bed, then accused a doctor of fucking her. An unrepentant Christian, he denied guilt for his murders up until the point that his holy neck snapped.

QUOTED (when confronted by police who explained they were searching for the killer of twenty women): "I only do my lady-killing on Saturday nights."










★ 77 ★ DENNIS NILSEN "The Monochrome Man"



The British titleholder for multiple murder, Nilsen's story is strikingly similar to Jeffrey Dahmer's. An alcoholic homosexual necrophile who couldn't confront his homosexuality, he brought transient males home after meeting them in gay bars, rendered them insensate with liquor, and strangled them.

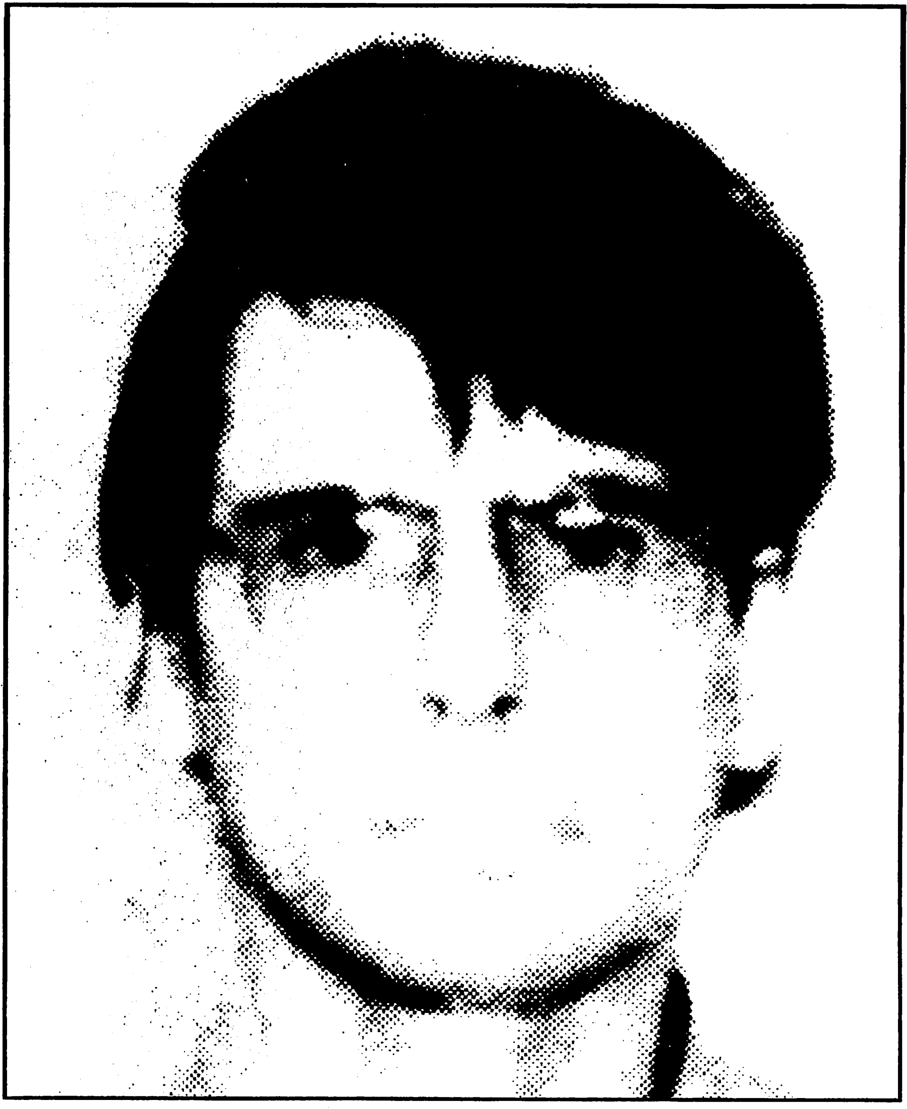
Born in Scotland to an abusively alcoholic Norwegian father, Nilsen's mother was a puritanical shrew who forbade Dennis from looking at his own nakedness. He nearly drowned at age eight, and while in a semiconscious state on the beach, he was molested by the person who saved his life. Nilsen loved his grandfather and was devastated when he died. It's telling that he was permitted to view granddad's cold, marblelike carcass in the casket. From that moment on, love and death were synonymous to him. He became remote, incapable of forging lasting friendships.

When a roommate of three years left him in 1978, Nilsen plunged into a maelstrom of loneliness. The subject of a book titled *Killing for Company*, he choked his first victim with a necktie after the man refused an offer to stay at Nilsen's flat. When his next house guest ignored his attempts at light conversation and slouched into a pair of headphones, Nilsen strangled the man with the headphone cord. After his third murder, Nilsen said he awoke and realized he "didn't have a say in it anymore. Someone else or something else was controlling me." One of the more eloquent serial killers, he described his behavior as "misplaced love out of its time and out of its mind."

After stripping, washing, drying, powdering, and dressing his victims' bodies, Nilsen would lay the cadaver in bed and masturbate beside it. He sometimes retrieved a corpse from beneath the floor and spent the night with it, placing it in a chair, watching the telly alongside it, and making small talk.

When the stench became unbearable, he burned his victims' bodies in backyard fires, also burning rubber to hide the smell of flesh. After slaying a dozen male drifters at his apartment in Cricklewood, he moved to a flat in London's starchy Cranley Gardens section. For his housewarming, he boiled pieces of his new apartment's first victim in a stove pot.

His five-year murder career ended in February, 1983, when a drainage clerk responded to complaints that neighborhood plumbing pipes were backing up. The man nearly vomited when he encountered the distinctive aroma of putrefied human meat, cut in white strips he described as looking "like chicken flesh." When police investigated, Nilsen, a former policeman himself, seemed



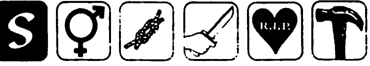
Nilsen: Dahmer prototype and ABBA fan.

relieved to have finally been captured. Detectives found various body parts hidden in Nilsen's tea chest and plastic bags containing three heads. He received a life sentence and is now imprisoned on the Isle of Wight. He is said to be a fan of Scandinavian pop gods ABBA, validating my long-held belief that this group was a fountainhead of evil.

QUOTED (describing his last victim's cadaver): "I just sat there and watched him. He looked really beautiful, like one of those Michelangelo sculptures. It seemed that, for the first time in his life, he was really feeling and looking the best he ever did in his whole life."

QUOTED (concerning his emotional isolation): "Loneliness is a long, unbearable pain.... There was never a place for me in the scheme of things.... I had become a living fantasy on a theme in dark, endless dirges.... I made another world, and real men would enter it and they would never really get hurt at all in the vivid, unreal laws of the dream. I caused dreams which caused death. This is my crime."

CHARACTER WITNESS: A co-worker said that Nilsen, like Norman Bates in *Psycho*, "wouldn't hurt a fly."









★ 78 ★
ALFRED G. PACKER



Acting as a guide for a team of twenty Colorado gold prospectors as the 1873 winter turned inhospitable, Packer ignored an Indian chief's warning that his group would find death in the San Juan Mountains. Packer was bluffing about his knowledge of the area, and fifteen disgruntled crew members turned back. The rest were blinded by fierce snowstorms, and they took shelter in an abandoned mountain hut. Using a rifle, Packer blew open their skulls as they slept, then picked them clean of possessions. He had plenty of money, but no food. Hmm....

He dissected them, froze their meat in the snow, packed it in his bag, and made for a nearby Indian camp with a supply of human Slim Jims. He ditched the meat near the camp, but Indians uncovered it, and Packer was taken into custody. He later escaped and wasn't found until nearly ten years later, when one of the original prospectors confronted him in Salt Lake City. Packer served sixteen years in a Colorado prison and died in 1907, visions of tit steaks dancing in his head.

QUOTED (regarding his feelings as he stumbled upon the camp armed with human meat): "When I espied the agency from the top of the hill, I threw away the strips of flesh I had left, and I confess I did so reluctantly, as I had grown fond of human flesh, especially that portion around the breast."



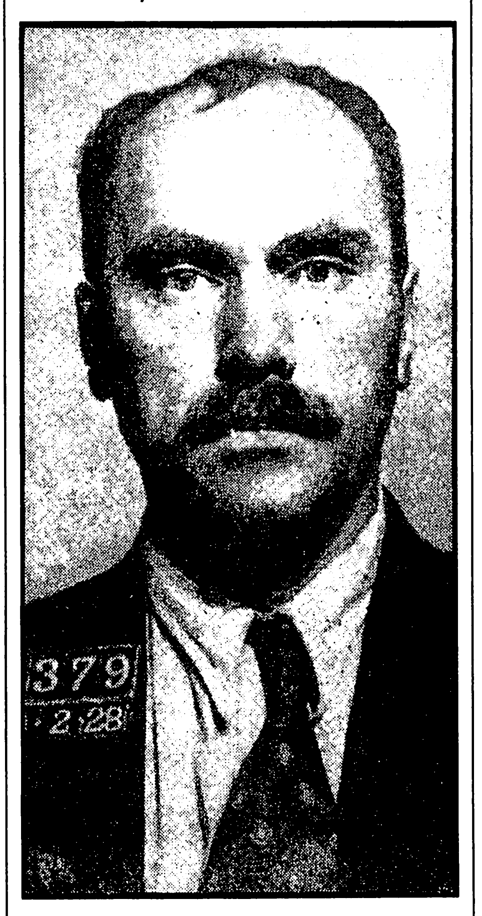




★ 79 ★
CARL PANZRAM



An angry white boy who once boasted of having sodomized a thousand males, Panzram had more bite-your-face-off attitude than all other serial killers combined. Born in 1891 to Prussian parents in Minnesota, he received a drunk-and-disorderly charge at age eight, became a robber at age eleven, moved up to arson at fourteen, and set a church afire one year later. While in reform school, he jerked off and pissed into drinks he served to authorities. Tortured by overseers with whips, straitjackets, and electrical shocks, his remaining scraps of humanity were forever drained away.



Unmatched in sadism, Panzram enjoyed the sight of brains oozing out of a man's ears. Adept at jailbreaks and a leader of prison riots, he spent his time behind bars concocting schemes for destroying entire cities. In 1920, he brazenly robbed the home of former President William Howard Taft, making off with forty thousand dollars in property. When he wasn't burglarizing and killing Americans, he worked in South America, served in an insurrectionist Mexican army, lived in Europe, and went on an African safari, where he killed eight blacks and fed them to crocodiles.

When handed a twenty-five-year sentence for burglary in 1928, he threatened to "kill the first person who bothers me." Within ten months, he beat a prison worker to death using an iron bar. He was sentenced to die at the gallows, which suited him just fine. He petitioned Herbert Hoover that his "constitutional rights to be hung be respected." They were respected on September 5, 1930, with Panzram shoving guards and hurling epithets until the bitter end.

QUOTED (in a letter Panzram sent to an anti-capital-punishment group which opposed his execution): "I do not believe that being hanged by the neck until dead is a barbaric or inhuman punishment. I look forward to that as a real pleasure and a big relief to me.... When my last hour comes, I will dance out of my dungeon and onto the scaffold with a smile on my face and happiness in my heart.... The only thanks you or your kind will ever get from me for your efforts on my behalf is that I wish you all had one neck and that I had my hands on it.... I believe the only way to reform people is to kill 'em.... My motto is: 'Rob 'em all, rape 'em all, and kill 'em all!'"









★ 80 ★
DR. MARCEL PETIOT
"The Great Liquidator"



Working in Paris during World War II, Petiot played both sides of the conflict to his perverse advantages: French authorities thought he was killing Nazis, and Nazis thought he was killing Jews. He was probably doing the latter under the aegis of providing westward passage for wealthy Jews. His method was foolproof, for when someone disappeared, the Nazis would think they had escaped, while family members feared the Nazis got 'em.

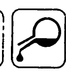
Petiot's Parisian "murder factory" housed a soundproof room with a peephole. After consulting an applicant, he administered an "inoculation" and directed him into a passageway to "freedom," which actually led to the soundproof room. Victims encountered a second door, a false one. When they turned back, they'd find the first door locked. Looking through the peephole, Petiot watched as the "inoculation" took hold. He started dumping bodies in his backyard, then switched to burning them as he ran out of space.

The physician was nearly caught in 1944, when police responded to complaints of rank-smelling smoke emerging from his chimney. Petiot came home as cops searched his house, explained that the Gestapo was after him, and was permitted to leave. Police later found a butcher shop in his basement, with body parts scattered everywhere and a pile of twenty-seven eviscerated corpses in a furnace. They also discovered forty-seven suitcases with fifteen hundred articles of clothing, presumably his victims' belongings.

Petiot was captured nine months later. He confessed to nearly one hundred and fifty killings but set the number at sixty-three during his trial. Petiot claimed to be a member of the French Resistance and said he only killed Nazi sympathizers. However, he couldn't name any of

them, and he was guillotined in May, 1946. He was a postal official's son, which probably explains everything.

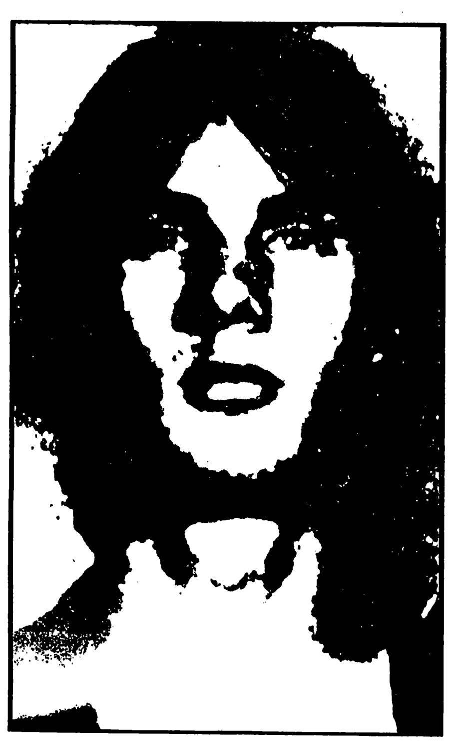





★ 81 ★ PATRICK PURDY "The Stockton Schoolyard Killer"



In January, 1989, wearing ear-plugs, a flak jacket, and army fatigues on which he had scribbled "PLO," "LIBYA," and "DEATH TO THE GREAT SATIN [sic]," Purdy turned the schoolyards of Stockton, California's Cleveland Elementary School into the killing fields. He unloaded a hundred and five rounds from an AK-47 into a group of children who were on recess, then took his own life with a handgun. Despite the massive ammo, he wasn't a particularly good shot, killing only five of an estimated four hundred and fifty kids. All of his victims were of Southeast Asian descent.



Purdy, described as a "chronically angry, alcoholic drifter," was said to have hated Asians, especially the Vietnamese, of whom Stockton has a high quotient. His Vietnam-vet father had been released from the Army as a mental defective. Police found toy tanks, jeeps, and soldiers in Purdy's motel room. It was speculated that he "rehearsed" with the miniature warriors before his rampage. A welfare recipient, he had a rap sheet as long as a porn star's dick, including a charge for "firing a pistol in a national forest." He purchased the AK-47 for three hundred and fifty bucks in Oregon, and his six-minute performance with it hastened a California ban on automatic weapons. The plastically altered musical space alien Michael Jackson later visited the school to comfort students.

QUOTED (as he left an Indian-owned fleabag motel on the way to his spree): "The damn Hindus and boat people own everything."



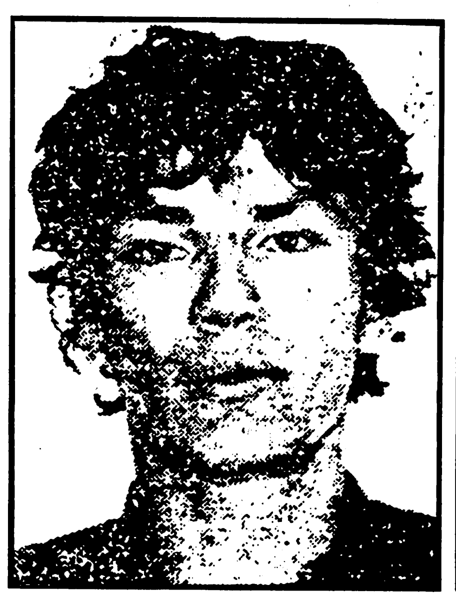


★ 82 ★ RICHARD RAMIREZ "The Night Stalker"



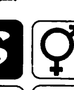
A charismatic fusion of Joey Ramone and Juan Epstein from *Welcome Back, Kotter*, this yellow-toothed drifter is a hero to young Satanists everywhere. Incurably devoted to crunch-metalloids AC/DC, Ramirez took their song "Night Prowler" to heart, sometimes playing it for hours. Over a six-month period in 1985, he slithered into unlocked homes in the L.A. and San Francisco areas, attacking before dawn while his victims slept. He bludgeoned, stabbed or shot them, sometimes butt-slamming them post-mortem. Males were usually dispatched with bullets to the head. Their spouses were assaulted next to hubby's lifeless mass. Mesmerized by Satanic iconography, Ramirez spray-painted pentagrams on some victims' walls and engraved one on a woman's thigh. Using a spoon, he gouged out an elderly woman's eyes, taking the jellied orbs with him.

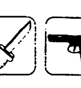
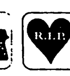
During a visit to Donna Myers, a friend in San Pablo, Ramirez saw a composite sketch of the Night Stalker on television and hinted that it might be him. He crossed the wrong person when he stole her daughter's jewelry, and Myers snitched. Ramirez saw a picture of himself in a Spanish newspaper connecting him to the theft, and he ran through the streets of East L.A. searching for a getaway car. He muffed a robbery attempt and was nearly killed by an angry mob before police arrested him.



In jail, Ramirez reportedly drew a pentagram on the cell floor using his own blood and bragged to another inmate that he had claimed twenty victims. Blasé about the whole ruckus, he initially refused being provided with defense lawyers. Aggressively remorseless during his trial, he winked and blew kisses at TV cameras, yelled "Hail, Satan!" in court, wagged the two-fingered "sign of the devil" at reporters, and flashed a pentagram tattooed on his left palm. A coke-shooting, dust-smoking, epileptic kleptomaniac in black clothing and shades, Ramirez apparently believed that Satan would protect him from being caught. He was identified by eight witnesses and received the death penalty. His response? "Big deal."

QUOTED (in his pre-sentencing statement): "You don't understand. You are not expected to. You are not capable of it. I am beyond your experience. I am beyond good and evil. Legions of the night, night breed. Repeat not the errors of the Night Prowler and show no mercy. I will be avenged.... Lucifer dwells within us all."





★ 83 ★ MELVIN DAVID REES "The Sex Beast"



Skiddly-be-bop-KILL! A tall, thin jazz musician who stashed a .38 revolver in his saxophone case, Rees terrorized Maryland and Virginia with his roadside slayings in the late fifties. He typically overtook cars and flashed his lights, forcing bewildered motorists to stop. His first killing occurred when he seized a couple at gunpoint and shot the woman when she refused to fork over her cash. Rees then raped the woman's bloody corpse. Near the murder scene, police found an abandoned shack littered with porn shots and morgue photos of women.

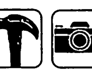
On a Virginia road in 1959, Rees abducted the Jackson family, binding the family patriarch's hands and shooting him. Jackson fell on his infant daughter and inadvertently smothered her to death. Rees then raped the Jackson women, apparently dragging Mrs. Jackson to his porno shack and forcing her to blow him. Rees was suspected in the subsequent killings of four schoolgirls. A friend, plagued by Rees's matter-of-fact descriptions of wanton slaughter, sent a letter to police charging him with the murders. A later phone call tipped investigators to Rees's whereabouts, and the Benzedrine-popping killer jazzman was arrested in an Arkansas music shop. At his parents' home, police found notes written by Rees which brutally described his crimes. Rees received the death penalty, shuffling off to the great cocktail lounge in the sky in 1961.

QUOTED (from his diary, describing the murder of the Jackson family): "Caught on a lonely



Rees and peroxided friend.

road.... Drove to a select area and killed husband and baby.... Now the mother and daughter were all mine.... Now I was her master."

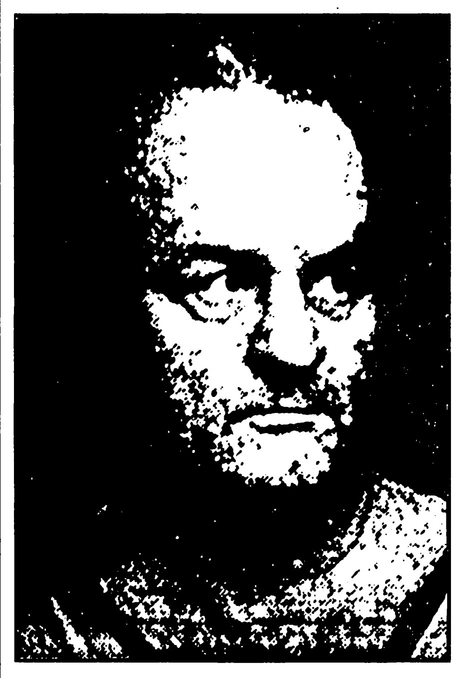


★ 84 ★
ARTHUR SHAWCROSS

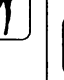


Under hypnosis during his murder trial, Art assumed the persona of "Ariemes," a thirteenth-century British cannibal who supposedly schooled Shawcross in the culinary joys of human flesh. He also spoke in a screeching whine as his mother, implying that mom possessed him as he murdered. He recounted a childhood event where his mother allegedly rammed a broomstick up his ass. This is rather standard fare for serial killers, but in the boring beer town of Rochester, New York, the televised proceedings were high drama.

Released from prison in 1988 after serving fifteen years for the strangulation slayings of two children, Shawcross embarked on a twenty-one-month spree where he killed eleven women, nine of them prostitutes. He says he killed one hooker for moaning too loudly during sex, another for calling him a wimp. He dumped his victims in local bodies of water and was arrested in 1990 when police spotted him near a frozen corpse. He was a noncombat Vietnamese vet who claimed to have cannibalized two Vietnamese girls during his tour of duty. He said he also ate portions of a ten-year-old boy and parts of two other victims. Like many killers, he once drove through town with a cadaver propped up in the passenger's seat. Before his apprehension, he frequented Dunkin' Donuts, the favorite haunt of Northeastern cops, quizzing officers about the



murder investigation. Shawcross received ten write-in votes during New York's 1990 gubernatorial election.

★ 85 ★
PATRICK SHERRILL
"Crazy Pat"



Neither the first nor the last, but the biggest of the rampaging postal workers. On August 20, 1986, Sherrill fixed himself scrambled eggs, put on his uniform, and arrived punctually as the sun rose over Edmond, Oklahoma's post office. Instead of birthday cards and utilities bills, his mailbag contained a .22 and two .45s. His pistols were loaded with "wadcutters," bullets which expand once inside the body. He shot down a supervisor first, killing thirteen others and finally himself during ten minutes of gunfire. He died a foot-and-a-half from his first victim, who had watched the previous day while Sherrill was loudly berated for his work performance. The man who gave Sherrill the browbeating overslept and escaped almost certain death. Though management in Oklahoma's post-office system is said to be hard-assed, co-workers claimed that Sherrill was indeed a pretty inept letter carrier. Yellow ribbons sprouted in Edmond and its environs after the shootings.

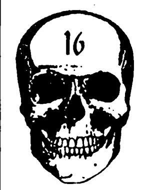


Neighbors described Sherrill as a loner who walked around his neighborhood at night dressed in camouflage, staring into their windows. He often mowed his lawn at midnight and rode solo on a bicycle built for two. A search of his house uncovered several bull's-eye and human-silhouette targets, a homemade silencer, and copies of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. Sherrill had once been diagnosed as suffering from "factitious post-traumatic stress disorder," a sort of psychosomatic battle fatigue.



★ 86 ★
RONALD GENE SIMMONS



Simmons was a fat, bald, bearded Arkansan who surrounded his Ozark trailer home with barbed wire and NO TRESPASSING signs. Alleged to be the father of his daughter's child, he abused his family both physically and sexually. In December, 1987, as his wife readied to divorce him and his daughter told friends, "I'd rather be dead than go on like this," he shot down fourteen of his inbred kinfolk. He also killed two others, one of whom was said to have resisted his lecherous advances. After surrendering to police, Simmons's lip quivered involuntarily when he was asked about his relatives. Bodies of five family members were found in his trailer, with nine others located in two abandoned cars and a nearby grave.

A former Air Force sergeant, he had previously been indicted for incest in New Mexico, but he loaded up his truck *à la* Jed Clampett and fled for them thar hills, where his ingrate relatives slowly turned on him. I mean, if a hillbilly can't fuck his daughter, whom *can* he fuck?

CHARACTER WITNESS: An acquaintance called Simmons "a common Joe."





★ 87 ★
ROBERT BENJAMIN SMITH



With the summertime exploits of Richard Speck and Charles Whitman, 1966 was a banner year for mass murder, a point which wasn't lost on Robert Smith. The high-school senior from Mesa, Arizona, idolized both killers, as well as Napoleon and Jesse James. So in November of '66, he left his house equipped with a nylon cord, some sandwich bags, two knives, and a .22 pistol which his parents had given him. Because it offered a high number of potential targets, he set out for the Rose-Mar College of Beauty, less than two miles from his home. He brandished his pistol upon arriving but was ignored. He shattered a mirror with one shot and commanded five women and two children into a back room.

"There'll be forty people here in five minutes," said one woman, trying to dissuade him.

"I'm sorry," Smith replied, "but I didn't bring enough ammunition for them."

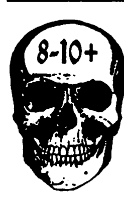
He had intended to bind the women, tie the sandwich bags over their heads, and watch them suffocate, but the bags wouldn't fit. Frustrated, he forced them to lie in a circle like the June Taylor Dancers, their heads in the middle. He then shot them, stabbing one woman who tried to flee. Someone heard the gunfire and called the police, who found Smith gloating over the bodies. Two women were already dead and three died later, including a three-year-old girl. Smith, described as a smart, jittery, girl-shy proponent of germ warfare, laughingly confessed to the killings. During the funeral, a preacher standing over the coffins said, "It was God's will."

QUOTED: "I wanted to get known, just wanted to get myself a name."






★ 88 ★
CHARLES SOBHRAJ



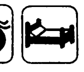
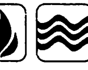
Born in Saigon to a Vietnamese mother and Indian father, the young Sobhraj witnessed hellish violence during the Indochinese conflict. Shipped off to France at age nine, he endured ceaseless racist barbs and developed a pointed hatred for Europeans.

As an adult check forger, diamond smuggler, and heroin dealer, he ingratiated himself with American and European tourists. After winning their confidence, he'd drug and strangle them, douse their lifeless stiffs with gasoline, and set them aflame. He drowned a rival pusher in a bathtub after administering him a lethal dose of smack. Sobhraj's career extended from France to India, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Nepal, Hong Kong, and Thailand. At one point, he was Asia's most wanted criminal. A brilliant escape artist, he was repeatedly caught but always managed to bribe, blackmail, talk, drug, or hacksaw his way out of jail. In 1976, he was apprehended in Bombay for trying to poison sixty French students. After receiving a life sentence in 1982 for murdering an Israeli, he drugged jail

Smith got his fame the old-fashioned way—he KILLED for it!

wardens and escaped, only to be captured a few weeks later.

QUOTED: "Always remember that their desire to keep me locked up is no match for my desire to be free.... I use psychology like stupid people use guns."

★ 89 ★
RICHARD SPECK



He drank all day on July 13, 1966, peeping at nurses sunbathing outside Jeffrey Manor on Chicago's seamy South Side. He had BORN TO RAISE HELL tattooed on one arm, possibly the same arm into which he shot dope after his day of drinking. Lustfully stuporous by nighttime, he staggered back to the nurses' dorm and thumped on the front door. When nursing student Corazon Amurao answered, Speck produced a knife and gun, bullying his way into the building. He corralled six nurses into a room, binding them with tattered strips from a bedsheet. He added three more hostages as they drifted in after returning from dates. The pizza-faced garbage man with greasy blond hair then took one girl to a separate room, knifing and choking her to death. It has been speculated that the first murder sent Speck into a sexual frenzy. At the rate of three per hour, he murdered all but one of the remaining nurses, missing Corazon Amurao, who had squirmed under a bed. He washed the blood from his hands after each killing. His solitary rape victim was Gloria Davy, the woman who most resembled his estranged wife. Speck penetrated her anus with a foreign object and wrapped his T-shirt in her panties, dropping the smelly bundle at the crime scene.

He also left ubiquitous fingerprints and several other dumb clues. In binding the nurses, he tied his knots like a seaman. He told Amurao he needed money to get to New Orleans. At a seaman's bureau less than a block from the nurses' dormitory, Speck had applied for a New Orleans-bound ship.

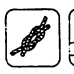
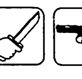
Leaving eight nurses dead, Speck went out the next morning and got drunk all over again. He stayed plastered in the ensuing days, jokingly pretending to slit a bartender's throat the night after the killings. He told bar patrons he was returning from Vietnam, where he had killed several people. Spending his time with three-dollar whores, he slept at a ninety-cent-a-night hotel. On July 16, a Chicago newspaper reported that Amurao had identified the killer. Speck slit his wrist, collapsed at the hotel, and was rushed to a hospital. Matching Speck's trademark tattoo to a newspaper description, a doctor called police. Though Ricky claimed no memory of the murders, it took a jury less than an hour to convict him, sentencing him to four hundred years.

Speck, twenty-four at the time of his abduction, was subsequently implicated in four murders which occurred prior to the nurse slayings. He blamed his deteriorated mental



state on being punch-drunk from too many barroom brawls. He also claimed to have slammed himself in his dome with a hammer after a childhood fight with daddy. The brain-damaged comic-book fan died in jail of a heart attack late in 1991.

QUOTED (to Corazon Amurao): "Don't be afraid.... I'm not going to kill you."



★ 90 ★
CHARLES STARKWEATHER & CARIL ANN FUGATE



A young, love-struck Sid and Nancy team who had the good sense to kill others instead of themselves. Charlie "Little Red" Starkweather, a five-foot-two, denim-clad, pigeon-toed James Dean wannabe, loved hot rods and hunting. The teenaged Nebraskan carried his .22 rifle almost everywhere he went, lugging it with him when he visited fourteen-year-old Caril Ann Fugate on January 21, 1958. Caril wasn't home, so Charlie amused himself with the gun while he waited. Caril's mother, not very fond of Little Red in the first place, yelled at Starkweather, slapping him for playing with a lethal weapon in her house. He slapped her back, and as Caril's stepfather tried to intervene, Starkweather shot both of them dead. When Caril came home, Charlie choked her two-year-old sister to death by ramming his rifle barrel in her throat. Bored, Caril turned on the television as Charlie made sandwiches and wrapped the corpses in newspapers. After cleaning up, he finally joined his lovebird in front of the tube. Caril placed a sign on her front door which read, "Every Body [sic] is Sick With the Flu." She shooed away the police when they came to investigate. The cops returned at the insistence of Caril's suspicious relatives, only to find that the killer couple had fled.

Over the next week, they wreaked havoc on the bitterly cold Plains States, killing seven people with the reckless enthusiasm only lovers can understand. Guided by Cupid, they were able to slip through a two-hundred-member Nebraskan National Guard barricade. With twelve hundred law-enforcement officials in pursuit, the pair were finally captured on a Wyoming road. At first, Charlie tried to plead Caril's innocence, but he changed his tune when she blamed him for the murders. Little Red was also found culpable in the execution-style slaying of a gas-station attendant occurring prior to his spree with Caril. He was broiled in the chair in June, 1959, a horde of swooning bobby-soxers keeping vigil outside the prison. Caril was paroled in 1976. The film *Badlands* was based on their story, with Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek in the primary roles, but the slick screen duo failed to duplicate the originals' goofy, lovesick homeliness.

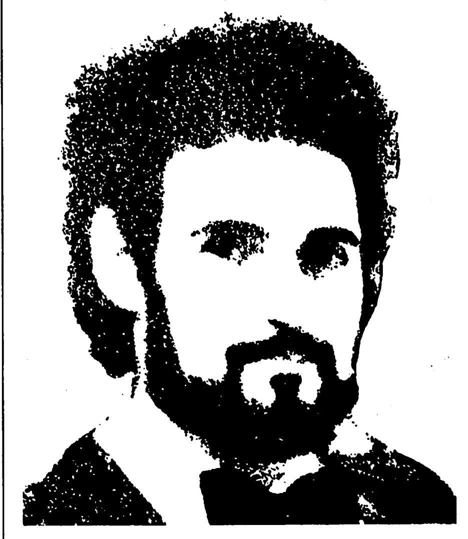
QUOTED (Starkweather): "They say this is a wonderful world to live in, but I don't believe I ever did really live in a wonderful world.... The more I looked at people, the more I hated them, because I knowed [sic] there wasn't any place for me with the kind of people I knowed. I used to wonder why they was here, anyhow. A bunch of goddamned sons-of-bitches looking for somebody to make fun of."

★ 91 ★
PETER SUTCLIFFE
"The Yorkshire Ripper"



When God's voice rises from a cemetery cross and commands you to kill hookers, it would be rather insolent to refuse, wouldn't it? Especially when the filthy wenches laugh at your inability to maintain an erection, right? Who could blame a guy if he clobbered their skulls with a hammer, particularly when he had



a schizoid wife who didn't understand him? He was letting off some steam!

A former gravedigger with vampiric features,

Fugate and Starkweather: young, in love, and maybe just a little bit stupid.

Sutcliffe was given to black mood spells. From 1975 to 1981, he preyed on prostitutes in and around the Northern England town of Yorkshire. After crushing his victims' skulls, he needlessly and repeatedly knifed them, stabbing one dead woman's eye because he felt the lifeless peeper looked at him disapprovingly. It was intimated that Sutcliffe shot his wad in the course of stabbing, the knife's steely shaft a substitute phallus. He set some of his victims free, possibly reaching climax before killing them. British police, frustrated with numerous false leads and forged taped confessions, had questioned Sutcliffe on nine occasions, releasing him nine times. He was apprehended while sitting in a car with a prostitute in 1981, and a subsequent trial led to a life sentence. For the time being, God must depend on others to rid the world of street trollops.

QUOTED (from a sign he placed in his lorry's window): "In this truck is a man whose latent genius, if unleashed, would rock the nation, whose dynamic energy would overpower those around him. Better let him sleep?"









★ 92 ★ MARYBETH TINNING "The Bad Mother"



*Rock-a-bye, baby, on the treetop/When the wind blows, the cradle will rock/When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall/*And if you cry too much, your emotionally disturbed mother will suffocate you with a pillow, tote your dead little body to the hospital, and blame it on a genetic disease or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Schenectady ambulance driver Marybeth Tinning received a great deal of sympathy and emotional stroking when her baby died in 1972. She enjoyed the attention so much, she smothered two of her other kids within the next six months. She showed no emotion at the funerals, but her grief manifested itself in other ways: She caked her face with makeup, tinted her hair a Bozo-the-Clown hue of red, and wore a maternity dress when she wasn't pregnant. She obsessively read and re-read a novel titled *Where are the Children?*, the plot of which dealt with a mother who had wrongly been charged with baby-killing.

At first, her neighbors felt sorry for Marybeth, but *her kids kept dying*, nine of them from 1972 until 1985. Their suspicions heightened when a pediatric exam revealed Marybeth to be normal. Tinning alleged the deaths were caused by birth defects, but one of the kids was *adopted.* After the ninth death, a neighbor accompanied Marybeth and her husband Joe to the hospital. When she visited them the next morning, she was shocked to find them calmly snarfing down their breakfast as if nothing had happened.

A concerned sister-in-law finally turned Marybeth in to police. A doctor ruled that she had suffocated the ninth child and possibly all others except the first. A psychologist hinted that Marybeth punished herself for the first death by re-creating it. The Bad Mother eventually confessed to three of the killings, receiving a twenty-year sentence for the ninth child's murder. At the prison nursery, where convicted moms can keep their kids for up to a year, Marybeth has been seen snooping around the cribs.

QUOTED: "I killed them. I killed my children.... I smothered them with a pillow because I'm not a good mother.... If I'd been a good mother, my other babies wouldn't have died."







Tinning and a soon-to-be-dead kid.

★ 93 ★
HOWARD UNRUH



As a soldier during World War II, Unruh fetishized his gun, cleaning it religiously. A tank gunner in the Battle of the Bulge, he kept a war diary which included a litany of how he killed each German, with full descriptions of their post-mortem appearance.

After the war, he returned home to Camden, New Jersey, but he just couldn't shake the militaristic mind-set. He held target practice in his parents' basement. He quarreled endlessly with his neighbors, making a list of imaginary insults they'd hurled at him. If a neighbor was thought to have committed an infraction, Unruh scribbled "retal" (retaliate) next to his or her name. In an act of inexplicable paranoia, he built a tall wooden fence around his backyard. When someone stole the fence on September 5, 1949, it sent the shy, surly Bible student over the edge.



During breakfast the next morning, he glared malevolently at his mother, who smelled trouble and split. Carrying two pistols, Unruh entered the local shoe-repair store, then the barber's, then the tailor shop, killing as he went. He slaughtered most of the neighbors against whom he had sworn to "retal." Though Unruh knew most of his victims, he also murdered cabbies and passersby. He then calmly returned home. A news reporter phoned his house, and Unruh genially tolerated his questions. He said he didn't know how many he had killed but guessed that it was a "pretty good score." It was—thirteen dead in twelve minutes.

Unruh surrendered to police outside his house. A group of twenty psychiatrists judged him insane, and he was thrown into an asylum. He was said to have attended Temple University, an experience which also damaged the mind of at least one magazine editor.

QUOTED: "I'm no psycho. I have a good mind. . . . I'd have killed a thousand if I'd had bullets enough."

★ 94 ★
CORAL EUGENE WATTS
"The Sunday-Morning Slasher"



His IQ may have been seventy-five, but he was smart enough to plea-bargain his way out of a murder rap. A paranoid schizophrenic, car mechanic, and amateur woodcarver, Watts was arrested in 1982 after attempting to drown a woman in a bathtub. He had arrived in Houston from Michigan sixteen months previously. Michigan police suspected that he was that state's "Sunday-Morning Slasher," a man who murdered four young women in the wee hours of the Lord's Day, stabbing and/or strangling them without sexual assault. The Michigan murders ceased after Watts's arrival in Texas, and similar slayings began to surface around Houston.

To the prosecutors' dismay, Watts left little evidence. In a plea bargain, he agreed to lead them to grave sites if they waived the death penalty. Watts was given a sixty-year sentence for burglary. Vengeance-hungry Texans were enraged, and Watts was forced to wear a bulletproof vest during his trial.

He once told a psychiatrist that he believed women are "evil" and should be exterminated. Member of a Pentecostal church, he possessed an almost mystical hatred of chicks and sought to save the world by removing the vaginal scourge. It was claimed that Watts's beloved uncle had been murdered by women relatives when Coral Eugene was but a child. He spent most of his life killing them back.

★ 95 ★
CHARLES WHITMAN
"The Texas Tower Sniper"



"What is your chief problem?" asked the psychiatrist's questionnaire, a query Charles Whitman had never considered. His mom had just left his abusive father. Charles, his head throbbing like a jackhammer, was recently given to explosive bursts of anger. He fantasized about ascending the observation tower at the University of Texas at Austin and showering students with bullets. The Eagle Scout and former Marine sharpshooter was acting like a bona fide psycho. Why? Depression over his parents' breakup? His heavy workload as an engineering student? What the hell was his problem? "That's why I'm here," he wrote after considerable rumination. "I don't know."



The shrink didn't know, either, and by July 31, 1966, Whitman was ready for the final solution. He murdered his mother at midnight, then stabbed his wife to death. The next morning, armed with guns, ammo, sandwiches, a radio, deodorant, and toilet paper, he made for the tower. (Whitman may have been primed for a mass slaying, but at least he wanted to *smell* good.) He slammed the tower receptionist in the skull with a rifle butt, killing her. Whitman then obstructed the stairway, shooting two sightseers caught on the stairs.

Perched atop the tower, he started blowing away pupils. He shot a pregnant woman in the abdomen, killing the fetus nesting peacefully inside her. When a man rushed to the woman's side, Whitman smoked the would-be Samaritan. A plane tried to take Whitman out, buzzing near the tower in the fashion of *King Kong*, but he sent it away with spirited salvos. Police were finally able to leap over Whitman's barricade and shoot him to death. The strapping student with the blond flattop had left sixteen dead and

thirty wounded in just over ninety minutes. If the secretary and two sightseers hadn't detained him, he would have been in time for the 11:30 changing of classes, a virtual turkey shoot.

Whitman ultimately *did* sense what was wrong with him. In a letter he wrote during the course of killing his mom and his wife, he requested that an autopsy be performed to detect any brain abnormalities. His prescience was spooky, as an examination uncovered a golf-ball-sized tumor forcing pressure on his brain's aggression center.

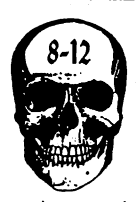
QUOTED (in his bon voyage letter): "To Whom It May Concern: I have just killed my mother. If there's a heaven, she's going there. If there's not a heaven, she's out of her pain and misery.... I love my mother with all my heart.... Life is not worth living."








★ 96 ★
CHRISTOPHER WILDER
"The Beauty-Queen Killer"

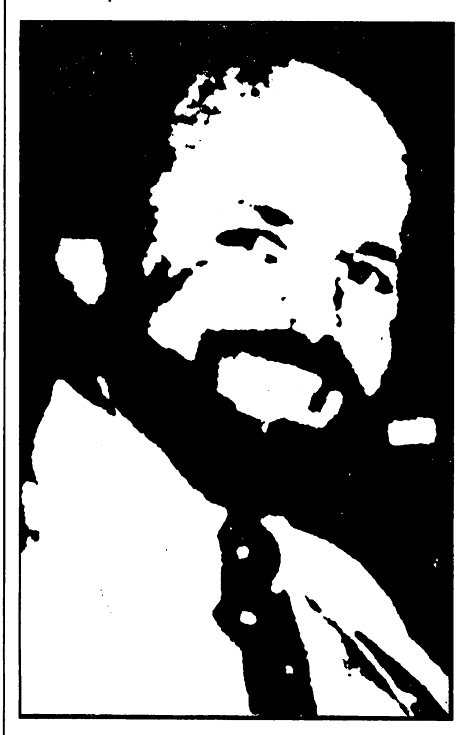


Chrissy-boy was a man of many hyphens, a tanned, gold-chain-wearing, credit-card-flashing Palm Beach-area jet-setter. He owned speedboats, surfed, and had a sauna in his bedroom. He was an amateur race-car driver and owned several vehicles, including a Porsche. He attended health clubs, liked expensive restaurants, and was an excellent tipper. He owned two construction companies but was socially conscious, contributing to the Seal Rescue Fund and Save the Whales. An animal lover, he hit his brakes at turtle crossings. And he killed broads.

One was a contestant in 1982's Miss Mannequin Pageant, and Wilder left her as stiff as any storefront dummy. Another was a cheerleader. Not all of his victims were beauty queens, but most were seduced by Wilder's smooth fashion-photographer come-on. He forged business cards which associated him with actual modeling agencies, duping would-be Claudia Schiffers into his confidence. He'd then bind, beat, rape, and stab or strangle them. He tortured one woman with a hundred-and-ten-volt electrical cord and tried to glue her eyes shut. Perhaps he was getting even for his traumatic upbringing, during which he received electroshock therapy.

He was placed on probation for drugging a woman with a slice of spiked pizza. Violating orders in 1982, he flew to Australia, land of his birth. Not content to sit on the beach, he blindfolded two fifteen-year-old girls in a hotel room and forced them to have sex with him and pose for nude snapshots. He was freed after posting $376,000 in bail.

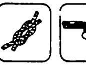
Back in the USA, he snapped in a big way during the spring of 1984. Over six weeks, using stolen cars and credit cards, he drove from the East Coast to the West Coast and back again, raping and killing as he went. He kidnapped Tina Marie Risico from a Torrance, California, mall, raping her in a motel room and subjecting her to his brand of shock treatment. Risico was a bit more streetwise than his other victims, and Wilder decided to make her an accomplice as he drove eastward. According to Risico, Wilder enjoyed watching television reports about himself. Falling in love with the teenaged girl, he kissed her goodbye at a Boston airport, handing her a lump of cash and a ticket to L.A.

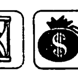


By that point, Wilder had killed at least eight women, and over five hundred FBI agents were on his tail, the largest dragnet since Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. On Friday, April 13th, New Hampshire state troopers cruising near a gas station spotted a car Wilder had stolen. A struggle ensued, and Wilder went for his .357, fatally shooting himself in the heart while tussling with a cop. Back in California, Tina Marie Risico went on a shopping spree.

QUOTED (on a 1981 videotape he made for a dating service): "I have a need to meet and socialize on a wider basis than I have been doing. I want to date and enjoy the company of women, women with depth. I'm looking for a long-term relationship but not marriage....I would like to have a family one day."






★ 97 ★
WAYNE WILLIAMS
"The Atlanta Child Murderer"



From July, 1979, to May, 1981, the humid, deep-fried city of Atlanta was besieged by a string of murders claiming young black males. Victims were variously shot, choked, bludgeoned, or suffocated, and most of their bodies were found along the Chattahoochee River. The city was gripped with fear, with citizens wearing green ribbons to demonstrate their concern. Show-biz luminaries such as Burt Reynolds, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Frank Sinatra donated money to help find the killer.

In the early morning hours of May 22, 1981, police heard a loud splash in the Chattahoochee and stopped a car which appeared to be pulling away from the scene. Its driver was Wayne Williams, a twenty-three-year-old ambulance-chasing photographer and shortwave-radio fanatic. Police questioned Williams and released him. Two days later, when a body was dredged from the river, they charged Williams with the Child Murders.

A black man who preferred mingling with whites, Williams had been arrested at eighteen for impersonating a police officer. He was an alleged bisexual who offered money to boys in exchange for carnal favors. A sometime musical talent scout, he had been seen handing out leaflets offering free counseling for males aged eleven to twenty-one.

The killings ceased after Williams's arrest. Concurrent with the Child Murders were the lesser-publicized killings of thirty-eight black females. Though Williams never confessed, he was convicted of two murders based on fiber evidence and linked to at least twenty more. A former Atlanta policeman said that the forensic evidence was flawed and that the case should be reopened. Williams's lawyer said that a KKK member named Charles Sanders had confessed on tape to helping other Klansmen kidnap and kill twenty-one young blacks. Since Wayne's arrest, it has been alleged that police suppressed this evidence in order to avert a race riot. The case is currently on appeal.







★ 98 ★
AILEEN WUORNOS
"The Damsel of Death"



RIGHT ON, SISTER! After countless creeps who prey on hookers, there *finally* comes along a hooker who kills her tricks! "Lee" Wuornos, who looks like Jack Nicholson with Axl Rose's hair, killed seven middle-aged white johns over a yearlong period ending late in 1990. Among her victims were a construction worker, a driver for a sausage company, a child-custody investigator, and a missionary for the Christ is the Answer Crusade. All were found in wooded areas near Daytona Beach, Florida, most of them naked and lying next to used condoms.

Until a month before her abduction, Wuornos had been living with lesbian lover Tyria Moore, a husky, gaptoothed dead ringer for Charles Durning. They stayed at the Fairview Motel, a plush fifteen-dollar-a-night establishment south of Daytona. Their room featured a 3-D wall replica of *The Last Supper*. Wuornos frequented the Last Resort, a skeezy biker bar with panties



drooping from the ceiling, where she liked to hustle pool and play Randy Travis's "Diggin' Up Bones" on the jukebox. Tyria said Aileen tried to service eight to ten clients a night. Moore recalled that Wuornos told her she only murdered her customers when they got rough or didn't pay. A cop later theorized that Wuornos, thirty-four, turned to robbery and murder because her hooking skills were fading.

Whatever Aileen's reasons were, her hatred for men reached to the marrow. Her teenaged parents were already divorced by the time she was born. "Wuornos" was her mother's surname. Though she never met her father, he was a convicted child molester who hanged himself in jail. Aileen's grandfather beat her with a belt buckle and killed himself, too. Her alcoholic grandmother died of a trashed liver. Wuornos first became pregnant at thirteen and started turning tricks a year later. At age twenty, she married a seventy-year-old man, a union which lasted one month. In 1978, Wuornos shot herself in the stomach, one of six suicide attempts. She told a psychologist in 1981 that she'd been raped and beaten ten to twelve times while hitchhiking.

After the murder conviction, a born-again Christian horse breeder "adopted" Wuornos and turned her on to Christ. Aileen Wuornos, who faces the electric chair, may have finally met a man she likes—Jesus.

QUOTED: "They're gonna electrocute me, give me life in prison, and I don't deserve it. . . . It was just self-defense."

CHARACTER WITNESS (Arlene Pralle, Wuornos's liaison to Christ): "[She] is very kind, compassionate, has a heart of gold. If the world could know the real Aileen Wuornos, there's not a jury that would convict her."



★ 99 ★ ZEBRA KILLERS



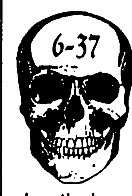
Anyone with sense knows that white people are a weak, recessive race of blue-eyed devils. A group of Black Muslims calling themselves "Death Angels" sought to aid Allah in eliminating these pink-skinned pariahs by killing them at random. To become a Death Angel, one had to murder either nine white males, five white females, or four white children. Free transportation to Mecca was promised to those who fulfilled these qualifications. An estimated two thousand persons earned their "wings."

The Zebra Killers were arrested before they reached their quota, but they sure as hell tried. Over six months from 1973 to 1974, they fatally shot or stabbed fifteen and wounded eight more. Murders were either drive-bys or walk-ups, most at close range. The Zebra Killers (so named because they were blacks who killed whites) frequently smiled and said, "Hello, devil" before shooting their victims. Whitey was shot while at a pay phone, going through the trash, in a laundromat, at a bus stop, and delivering a teddy bear to his sister. On January 28, 1974, the Zebras killed five Caucasians in one night.

A group of five black men were found to be the principal perpetrators, but one (A.C. Harris) turned informant and testified with impunity. The Nation of Islam paid for three defense lawyers. At an exhausting trial where stenographers logged three-and-a-half-million words, the four defendants were found guilty and received life sentences. One of the accused, J.C. Simon, testified on the stand that he'd received a personal visit from Allah. Was Simon at least gracious enough to serve Allah some coffee and a nosh?



★ 100 ★ ZODIAC KILLER



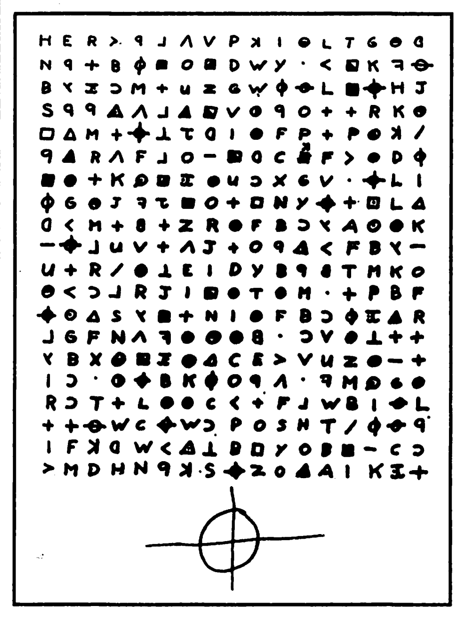
Some people will do anything for publicity. The elusive "Zodiac" killed people and blabbed about it in roughly two dozen letters to California newspapers. He described his murders with crystalline accuracy, including details that only the police and the killer would know. He sometimes told cops where they could find the bodies. After slaying a cabdriver, he sent a letter to the San Francisco *Chronicle*, enclosing a shred of the cabbie's bloody shirt. In one letter, he claimed to be "very upset" that Bay Area residents hadn't responded to his request that they "wear some nice Zodiac buttons," threatening to take out an entire school bus if they didn't comply. Taunting the San Francisco Police Department, many of his murder missives ended with a body count: "Me-37; SFPD-0." Fond of quoting Gilbert and Sullivan, he was an apparently literate man who tried to throw off police by stuffing his epistles with gross misspellings. Some of his mailings were in a cipher which baffled investigators, though it later turned out to be Morse code. It was speculated that he masturbated while writing his letters.

He was spotted after the cabdriver murder and described as a heavyset man with a red crew cut and glasses. He was known to strike couples on weekends, near bodies of water and under a new or full moon. He killed a couple in a lovers'-lane setting just before Christmas, 1968. On July 4, 1969, he shined a flashlight in the eyes of a couple who were parked alone. Holding them at gunpoint, he bound them, stuck a knife in the man, and stabbed the woman in a cross pattern. (Other accounts say he shot them, but that's journalism for you.) Using a magic marker, he then scribbled the date and the cross-within-a-circle Zodiac symbol on their car. The girl died but her boyfriend survived, relating how his attacker wore a square hood emblazoned with the Zodiac sign.

Since Zodiac was never caught, and since California is the Murder Capital of the Universe, it's difficult to tally his victims. Though his killings were thought to have ceased, he wrote the San Francisco Police Department in 1974, apparently hurt that he was fading into obscurity and promising to murder again if he didn't receive his due respect. Though he has vanished from the limelight, some think he's now operating in New York City. The film *Dirty Harry* was supposedly based on Zodiac's story, with Clint Eastwood hunting the mysterious "Scorpio."

QUOTED (from a coded letter, with misspellings and grammatical errors corrected so you don't bitch about typos): "I like killing people because it is so much fun. It is more fun than killing wild game in the forest, because man is the most dangerous animal of all. To kill something gives me the most thrilling experience. It is even better than getting your rocks off with a girl. The best part of it is that when I die, I will be reborn in paradise, and all [that] I have killed will become my slaves. I will not give you my name, because you will try to slow down or stop my collecting of slaves for the afterlife." ■







HO CHI MINH'S REVENGE

VIETNAMESE GANGS INVADE AMERICA

SUMMER, 1975. NIGHT NOW AWAITS ME. I AM BEING RECALLED TO NATORM HEADQUARTERS. DO I HAVE TO GO BACK TO THIS HELL AGAIN?

Sweat runs down my back like a slow, writhing snake. I'm gripping a rifle on the banks of Vietnam's Yan River. Scowling VCs face me across the water, lobbing grenades and blasting ammo. A tiny Vietnamese boy walks up and watches as my ass gets blown away by Cong soldiers. Another dead Yankee.

Where were we? My brother fought in Vietnam when I was as small as the kid standing next to me. We tacked a newspaper map of Vietnam on our basement door. Da Nang. Pleiku. I knew my bro went there to kill "gooks." I ran out to the car as he left for the airport, begging him to let me kill "gooks," too. Now I'm in an arcade playing a video game called NAM-1975, and the "gooks" just killed *me.* GAME OVER.

This ain't Vietnam, it's Orange County, California, the USA's model suburban jungle. Widely considered the nation's most conservative county, its numbingly faceless terrain is home to Disneyland, Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral, and the Nixon Library. Anti-homo evangelists and pro-life terrorists are celebrities here. Planes fly into John Wayne Airport. Anaheim hosts the California Angels, owned by Indian-killin' buckaroo Gene Autry. Yippie-yi-yo-ki-ay!

Everywhere in Orange County looks like everywhere else in Orange County: flat pavement, micro-malls, palm trees, and sunshine. Hot, smog-glazed boulevards stretch forever past trailer parks, gated condos, and beige warehouses. Dull pastels spring from nowhere and swallow the landscape. It's a celebration of synthetic carpeting, plastic plants, and air freshener. Been to Denny's lately? Then you've been to Orange County.

Amid this conformist splendor live an estimated one hundred and thirty thousand Vietnamese, the largest Viet ghetto outside of Vietnam. Nearly all are refugees, "boat people" who fled after Saigon's fall. They huddle in the quiet towns of Westminster, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana. It's a self-contained fishbowl of a world. Most of these households speak primarily Vietnamese. They funnel their dough into Vietnamese-owned shops. Like other Asian immigrants, they're entrepreneurial wizards.

Of course, Vietnam and America go together like soy sauce on a Twinkie. This oriental-occidental clash sparks some weird fusions: Buddhist scriptures in hotel rooms, shaven monks at the laundromat, and giggling Asian girls whizzing by in subcompacts with "Are We Having Fun Yet?" bumper stickers. A home-grown Viet music industry begets clumsy versions of "Me So Horny" and (what community would be complete without?) Elvis and Madonna impersonators. Free tabloids and newspapers, all in Vietnamese, scream with headlines such as SAMMY DAVIS JR. KHONG THIEU NO and O TUOI 60, CLINT EASTWOOD HET CON NGAU. The Viet vibe is strongest in Westminster's Little Saigon, an explosion of fresh squid, herbal pharmacies, and laser acupuncturists. It's a briny stew to a Westerner, but admirably clean and tidy. Nice, bright, shiny, and nice....

Unless you count sadistic, Uzi-strapped street gangs. When people in this sealed society are assaulted or robbed, it's almost always by someone Vietnamese, probably a teenaged gangster. Viet gangs stalk their own kind. They rarely, if ever, attack other ethnic groups. A merciless minority within the community, they frighten other Viets into silence.

Police have identified up to seventy-four Vietnamese gangs based in or passing through Orange County. Most are mere boys, ranging in age from twelve to twenty. They call themselves Cheap Boyz, Scar Boyz, Orange Boyz, Natoma Boyz, Mohawk Boyz, Santa Ana Boyz, Oriental Boyz, and Lonely Boyz Only. There are girlz, too, among them Dirty Punks, South Side Scissors, Banana Girlz, and IBK—Innocent But Killers.

Vietnamese gangs differ radically from most street gangs. First off, they're better armed. They have a fondness, nah, a *fetish,* for high-caliber automatic weapons. Second, they never claim turf. Members are free to leave or switch gangs at any time. There are no bloody initiations or "jumping out" ceremonies. The only condition for membership is a willingness to break the law.

Viet gangs coexist peacefully with other Viet posses to the point where they plan and run capers together. When violence breaks out, it's usually a personal vendetta or a cockfight over a female, not an economic war between rival cartels. Ten Vietnamese gangs could go to the same party, and the worst that might happen is a hangover or two.

Unlike L.A.'s cocaine warriors, Orange County's Viet gangs aren't known for slinging dope. They prefer property offenses such as extortion, fraud schemes, grand theft auto, and computer-chip heists. (Chip-running can be more lucrative and harder to prosecute than selling crack.)



A Vietnamese Elvis impersonator.

Crimes are typically staged in "crash pads," motel rooms chosen from among America's wide selection of low-cost dinginess. One person rents a room, then invites up to twenty friends in, razing the mattresses and tearing down wall fixtures. They'll go make a hit and return to the pad, ready for a criminals' pajama party. Frighteningly mobile, the same group may pull jobs on both coasts within forty-eight hours, driving or plane-hopping from scene to scene. It's a nifty way to avoid getting nabbed. At a recent arrest in Texas, police found gang members from California, New York, Kansas City, and Oklahoma sharing the same hotel room. Viet gangs like to drift, settling nowhere.

Their signature crime is the home-invasion robbery. Viets tend to distrust American banks and keep their gold, cash, or jewelry at home. Gangs meticulously case Viet houses for valuables, noting all residents and their daily schedules, plotting escape routes, setting up fences, and generally scheming like architects.

Then comes the violation. One person, often a female, taps on the front door. Someone answers, and a masked gang rushes in, taking the family hostage. They bind and gag their victims with duct tape or telephone cords. When the gang feels a family isn't coughing up all the loot, they torture its weakest members. They've zapped babies with stun guns, poured scalding water on grandmothers, dunked infants' heads in toilets, jabbed their prey with hypodermic needles, and punched little girls in the nose. They're quick to pistol-whip (or shoot) anyone who resists. In '86, they wasted a mother of fourteen children while she prayed.

Not surprisingly, victims have been reluctant to identify their assailants. In a closed community, news and threats travel fast. Gangs exploit the Viets' cultural isolation. Many Viets are unfamiliar with the US bail system. They see gangsters back on the streets hours after being arrested. Figuring the cops were bribed, they clam up.

Police see little evidence of older, syndicated Asian mobsters pulling the strings. The more entrenched Asian criminal groups (such as Frogmen, Paratroopers, Hung Pho, and Viet Ching) don't usually mingle with street gangs because, shucks, the young'uns won't show respect for authority! Police have, however, noticed a continent-wide "Vietnamese Underground Railroad," a network of cafes, pool halls, and restaurants. Through word-of-mouth, street gangsters know the "safe houses" from L.A. to Boston, Vancouver to Tijuana. They collect names and numbers in each city, pooling their felonious info. If the law busts a gangsters' coffee shop in, say, Dallas, most of Orange County's Vietnamese gangs will know about it the next day.

"Their grapevine is outrageous," says Garden Grove police officer Al Butler, "[but] I don't think we're going to see the traditional national organization develop for a number of years yet." A jovial Santa *sans* whiskers, Butler says Viets are democratic by nature and resist being led. Viet gangs don't have "godfathers." The "leader" is whoever wants to orchestrate the next crime. Everyone's opinions are considered important, and everyone shares in the booty. "They've already got the contacts," Butler says. "You just need leadership.... But if they ever *decide* to get organized, uh, we're gonna be in deep shit."

The Garden Grove PD keeps three albums full of photos confiscated from Viet gangs. Leafing through, one finds them hoisting machine guns, snarling like wolverines, and lying in pools of blood. Someone's bare shoulder shows juicy red gashes made by a cop's K-9. One proud crew surrounds a NEED HELP? PLEASE CALL POLICE sign. The Four T's brandish their tattooed logo, Vietnamese words starting with 'T' meaning Love, Money, Prison, and Crime.

Most subjects pose with skeletal, reptilian grace. They prefer natty, Vegas-style uniforms—call it *Saigon Vice:* gel-encrusted pompadours, loud polka dots, crisp disco suits, and Italian shoes. Taking their cues from Europe, especially Paris, they favor dance-oriented new wave and black threads. Many wear beepers. It's often impossible to tell a Vietnamese gangster from a Vietnamese insurance salesman.

Chameleonic, Viet gangs avoid external symbolism such as graffiti and "colors." Slippery, they almost always deny being members. Scars are the best visual tip-off. In half-psychotic displays of endurance, Viet gangsters sizzle their flesh with cigarettes. The scar, typically on the hand or arm, indicates readiness to commit crime. More scars usually mean more experience. When gangsters cruise cafes



The Vietnamese Madonna.

and restaurants searching for accomplices, the first thing they look for is dead, mottled skin.

Kong has a big-ass cigarette scar between the knuckles of his middle and index fingers. It looks like a chewed blob of bubble gum. He covers it with a pool cue and slams the thirteen ball into the side pocket. Kong admits to running some car-insurance scams with gangsters, but he denies being a member.



HÀNG XÓM HÃY TRÔNG CHỪNG CHO NHAU ĐỂ CÙNG CHỐNG LẠI **TỘI ÁC**

Last week, a Viet gang hit his next-door neighbors' house in broad daylight. They took everything, from cash to sneakers. "When they do it, they don't *feel,*" Kong says. "They don't care if baby or old people, they don't care.... We don't want to talk because newspapers is all bad. Vietnamese people always doing bad. They killed this, they steal that. We want you to talk about good. I'm a hardworking guy."

Kong went to school in highlands near Saigon during the Vietnam War. He remembers American soldiers: He says they gave "candy" to some of his classmates, killing them. When the communists took over, the US began to look like the lesser of two evils. After seventeen failed attempts, Kong escaped Vietnam on a boat six years ago. He says he'll return next year to visit his parents. "I'll open a Disneyland in my country," he smiles. Kong studies auto repair in the daytime. He says he has more money and less friends than he did in Vietnam. "The kids see all the money here, and they want it, too. Quick. Back in Vietnam, you have no money. No gangs, too. You do a crime and you run, but you have no place to run. The police catch you, they hurt you and beat you. Here, it's too easy to do crime. It's easy to get away. You have money, you can go anywhere. A hotel room, another state. I like America. I like freedom.... Kids join gangs here because it's the American way."

Coffee time. Electric fans yawn in this dark cafe as I slurp iced java and try not to look Caucasian. Christmas lights blink epileptically. Drum-heavy Viet pop swirls loudly all around. Young Asian males eyeball me, their faces glowing blue from table-top video games. Brian, born in Saigon but now a California boy, asks the cafe owner if it's cool to talk. It's cool.

Brian says he was asked to join a gang in high school but refused. He later flirted with a member of the Wally Girlz and found all his tires slashed. He's seen female gangsters gouge out people's faces using their high heels. "They have no concept of life and death," he says sheepishly. "I don't think they do it for money. They do it for *fun.* See who can be the baddest.... They don't care. What've they got to lose?

"I'm risking my life talking to you guys," he tells us, anxiously baring his teeth. "When I'm driving home from here, I look in my mirror every two seconds. I'm afraid they'll tail me. I'm always afraid somebody's gonna tail me. One night I was coming down here on the Garden Grove Freeway, and I got off on the ramp, and this black car with smoked windows catches up on my left side. The back window rolls down, a rifle comes out, and I slam on my brakes. They missed me. They were Vietnamese. I don't even think they *knew* me."

Each second, I know less and less. "How do you know *I'm* not a gang member?" he teases. "The media, every time you see a story, there's a lot of fantasy. I had a friend, nineteen, who shot himself at a local firing range. I was *there.* He turned around, stuck the gun under his chin, and BLAM!—killed himself. The newspapers said it was an accident. That's why I don't trust the newspapers. The gangsters don't, either." Gulp.

His eyes bulge as he scans the other tables. "You guys are moving targets in this area. This is a real suicide mission. Just get into the surface. Don't go any further. Because if you get into this deep, you'll never get out of it. It's like going into the mouth of a cobra."

He stiffens. "It's time to go now." He quickly pays the tab and ushers us out of the cafe. "Four gangsters who know me just went in," he says. Two hollow-cheeked Viets pull up to the curb in a red Firebird. One hops out and walks up to a newspaper box. He pounds it open with his palm and grabs a free paper, laughing. He glares at Brian, whose face falls blank. Brian turns away and disappears.

Ever stick your dick in quicksand? Me neither, but it must feel something like trying to grasp Vietnamese culture. It's impenetrable. As in the Vietnam War, it's impossible to pin down the enemy. A hundred friendly Vietnamese say they know nothing, then walk away. Accent marks of unknown words hook in my throat. Eels wriggle through my colon. Pigeons rise from pigeon soup and peck at my forehead.

Sgt. Frank Hauptmann, head of the Garden Grove PD's Asian gang unit, says Viets grew up with bullying secret police and assume all American lawmen are CIA.



Nhà Xuất Bản Xuân Lê
Tái bản lần thứ I, 6/1991



"They don't want to report anything unless they've been shot or stabbed and they can't move and the cops come there and it's time to talk," he sighs. "Several of our restaurants have had shootings in them, and you'll have fifty or sixty people in there, and nobody saw anything. They were all 'in the bathroom.' There's one toilet stall in there. How can all sixty people be in there?"

He pops in a hidden-camera videotape of a drive-by shooting at Garden Grove's Tu Hai restaurant. In slo-mo black-and-white, showers of smoke and glass spray a window-side booth. Everyone ducks. Two waiters root under a counter for an arsenal of shotguns and pistols. Wearing a ruffled shirt and bow tie, one waiter lets the buckshot rip, knocking himself backward. Diners grab their gats and file outside like a trained SWAT team. A woman straggles behind, swiping a tip from an evacuated table. Seems like they've run through this fire drill before.

But they'd never admit it. "Shooting? What shooting? We've never had any shootings," insists a real-life Tu Hai waiter, his face scrunched in feigned confusion. His restaurant's shattered windows have been replaced and reinforced with thick plexiglass slabs. An extra protective shield rims the cash register. The waiter titters, shifting his weight. "We never have any problems." Bullshit.

Another restaurant, another denial. Sucking on curried shrimp in the Bolsa Mini Mall, I ask a beaming waitress about gangs. Her face drops. She seems surprised, suddenly depressed. "Gang members? Oh, no. We've *never* had them here. They *never* come here. Get in your car and ride down to the Little Saigon Mall. It's only two minutes away. They go there all the time. But they *never* come here."

Al Butler drives us around the next night, scoping out Vietnamese murder suspects. (Two carloads of Viets traded words at Fountain Valley's Mile Square Park the previous Sunday. One kid ended up with his brains on the upholstery.) We glide past the Bolsa Avenue restaurant. "Oh, yeah? They never had gang members in there?" he laughs. "Hmm. Well, what about the time when someone shot up one, two, three, *four* cars outside when they were looking for Viet nationalists inside the diner? No, *they* weren't gang members."

Freeze. Butler's partner stops a spotless red Toyota MR2 fitted with spoilers, black vinyl bra, and racing tires. Real lowrider shit. We crawl up behind. An Alpine stereo system with refrigerator-sized speakers rattles the asphalt. Two chrome silhouettes of naked women straddle a gold-rimmed license plate. Custom window lettering spells MERCEDES BOYZ. Someone plunked about twenty-five Gs into this ride.

Two linguini-thin Vietnamese kids slide out, their angular faces splashed with red, blue, and yellow police lights. Hai, twenty, and Tuan, sixteen, laugh at each other and squat. The police snap Polaroids. Hai wears a gold Mercedes-Benz medallion. The cops want to know what's up. *This little thing was just a key chain that I liked and turned into a necklace. I didn't even know it meant "Mercedes." The paint job? Uh, the car came that way when I bought it. Wow, Mr. Officer, I didn't know "Mercedes Boyz" was a gang name. You're right, Mr. Policeman, I'd better get that changed.* Hai's either astoundingly dumb or too fucking smart.

Initials of family members still in Vietnam sit suspended in a spider web tattooed on Randy's forearm. On the other arm, a giant dragon slithers up from the inner wrist to the crack in his elbow. Randy (a name he chose for this article) speaks softly and smiles a lot, which disrupts his skinny little Wayne Newton mustache.

He's been in the US eleven years, five-and-a-half of them behind bars. He left Vietnam when he was eleven, bouncing from Malaysia to the Philippines to Alaska and finally into the arms of Catholic sponsors in Texas. He went to live with his brother and uncle when they immigrated from Vietnam to Orange County. Randy's memories of Vietnam are faint, though he holds a grudge against America for invading his country. "I remember my mom would take me, you know, hold my hand and step over people dead," he says. "That's all I know. In Saigon. I lived there and I come over here, and see, like, feel lonely over here, you know, because I have no family. I just *got* here. I feel very lonely and without my family. All I got is my uncle, my brother. And I lived with them...."

His eyes sink into the carpet. "When I just started in school, I don't have no friends at all. See, because I don't speak no English and stuff like that, you know? Like one time, I have to go away in the corner and play by myself. Buy a Snickers or something and go into the woods and eat. I always alone.... I made a lot of friends in school and stuff. And I went to their house, and it happened sometimes at dinner time, and I see the whole family sittin' down at the table, when they got dad, mom, sister, brother, everything, you know, and I think, I say, 'How come their family is so happy? I don't have it,' you know? Most of the time my brother went out. Whenever I feel like eating, I have to cook it myself. You know, eat it myself. That's why it make me sad, you know?"

He met some gangsters during a trip back to Texas. A drinking buddy invited Randy home, plied him with whisky, and asked for his help in a burglary. Feeling warm, Randy complied. "They told me, 'Let's go do something,' you know? I said, 'Let's go *do* it! I'm on the *move*.'... I made friends. And they close to me more than my family, I mean my brother and stuff. I think these guys must care for me more than *my* family. So I cared for the gang. You know, whatever they do, *I* do. Especially I don't want to look bad, be called chicken and stuff like that. You know, I want to be *some*body."



Randy started rolling with a gang based south of Houston. He lived with about ten other members in the same house, where they smoked weed and got on each other's nerves. The gang later split from the house and began living in motel rooms. That suited Randy's teenaged gonads fine, because he could bring *girls* to his motel room, something forbidden by his brother back in Orange County. When asked what he liked about America, he offered the same word every other Viet used without exception: "Freedom. You can go anywhere, you can eat anyplace, and nobody gonna bother you. In Vietnam—I just got a letter from my mom not too long ago, and she told me if you got a chicken and you want to eat one, you have to let the communists know before you can kill it."

Faced with freedom (and all the Kentucky Fried Chicken he could ever care to eat), Randy went wild. "I only go and have fun, OK? Yeah. That's what I am. Go have fun. Of course, yes, you have to get money before you can go have fun." His first crimes were puny, things such as stealing car radios or busting into video games and making off with the quarters. "It's fun, you know?... It's more exciting when you go and steal with about four or five guys, going in a car at nighttime, going driving around looking for a car that's got a stereo, you have to pick the lock to get in there, you know? Sometimes people chasing you and stuff. What happens when you got back is you talk about it, you know? All get high and talk about it and laugh.... I think it's more fun than to stay home."

He started free-falling through America, plunging from petty crime to armed robbery. He was even arrested for homicide, but the charges were dropped due to insufficient evidence. Texas lawmen nailed him after only his second robbery. Randy did two years in a prison wing with thirteen other Viets. He saw many of his friends killed in prison riots. "I think I'm very bad," he says. "I think I was bad, OK? Bad*ass.* But I don't think so no more. Compared to somebody else. But I always thought I was bad. Especially when I got the gun with me," he says, bursting into laughter.

"Long as I make the money today, I live

for today," he says, his right leg bobbing up and down. "I don't believe in nothing.... 'Cause when I was young, I was crazy. I was very crazy. I'm serious, you know? See, like, when I was young, when I was going out, I don't like people lookin' at me crazy. First of all, staring at me and I don't like it—'What the fuck you lookin' at?' You know? If the guy got a heart, I'll start fighting him. That's the way I am.... I got pulled a gun on my head once, right here, Brookhurst and Euclid? I got pulled a gun on my head, and I told him to go ahead and shoot."

Cold blood. Set loose from a Texas prison, Randy fluttered back to Orange County and soon developed a full-blown coke habit. Dancing at a party, he saw a girl next to him get iced by gangsters who were gunning for someone else. When Randy fucked up an armed robbery in Westminster, a Vietnamese homeowner planted two lead caps in his abdomen. At the time, Randy wished he'd died.

"When I got caught, when I got shot, I don't want to live. My friend told me they gonna take me to the hospital, but I go, I'll put a gun on his head. I told him, 'If you take me to the hospital, I'm gonna shoot.' I mean, I'd give up my life, you know, I don't even care anymore. I feel like I wanna *die* or something. And I would pass out. They'd throw me in the corner and just call the ambulance, and I didn't know, you know? And it was scary. After I woke up, I thought I was no more. I don't know nothing. I started to get up. Just hurt, you know? And I look around, and there's all kinds of wires in my nose and everything. I thought, 'You know, I'm in the hospital.' "

Washed with sterile lights in a police substation, Randy's now on parole. He says gang life's getting too hairy. When he started moving with gangs in '83, the worst weapon he saw was a knife, maybe an occasional revolver. These days it's high-tech ballistic warfare, video games vérité. Randy says Asian pride will cause gang violence to swell. "The way they are is, 'You better than me? I want to be better than you. See, if I be better than you, you want to be better than me.' They keep goin' up. That's to me how I feel. And even crazier."

But not Randy. Not anymore. He's got a steady girlfriend and a job delivering furniture. It pays a grand a month—the same amount he would make sacking just one Viet house. But five months out of jail, Randy swears he'll never go back. "My friends, all my friends, most of them in jail right now. Most of them. And some of them,



if they not in jail, they die. And if they not die, they're married."

Yikes! Around the age of twenty, the bulk of Viet street gangsters quit, settle down, get hitched, start businesses, have children, blah, blah, blecch. For those who bail out, their gang membership was almost (in a sick, bloated sense) a rite of passage, a way of sowing their wild oats. Don't worry—when they leave, there are plenty of trigger-happy thirteen-year-olds eager to fill the vacancy.

The kids coming up today are a different breed from Randy. They're relatively affluent and Americanized. Contrary to what you might expect, their minds aren't twisted from war trauma; the majority of the pee-wee gang members are too young to remember *anything* about Vietnam. (Most of the over-twenty-five set, the ones who grew up with napalm and random bombs, are upstanding citizens.) The new gangsters come off like suburban brats with too much time on their hands.

"I got one friend that he just got out of jail, as a matter of fact, not too long ago," Randy says. "His parents had a jewelry store right here on Bolsa, and he gets everything he asks his parents. New car? His parents buy him a new car. Everything he gets. He got a wife and kids. But he still hangs around, goes off with people. I don't know why—I mean, I can't—if his parents treat him wrong, I can understand it. But everything he asks, he get it. But I don't know why. I just can't understand it. But I asked him, 'What do you do that for?' I mean, 'Just for *fun*,' that's what he tells me."

"Let's look at it *this* way: The Vietnamese used to be a rural people, mostly," says Andrew Lam, editor of San Jose-based *Asian Insights* magazine. "The culture is very much rooted to the land. I remember villages that were two kilometers away, you know, from each other, that had different accents. What it means is that it's very much a type of sedentary culture where you are defined by the extended family and so on around you. And I think that the psyche that happens to a lot of us is that you're sort of taken away from that and put onto another landscape where mobility is the key thing in America, where you become nomadic. I think it's very much the American requirement: To be in America, you have to be capable to move about. And not only from one city to the next, but from across country and so on. From one job to the next and so on. So the kind of bonds that we make in this country are minimal. You sort of burn your bridges when you move somewhere else. And that's very much deleterious to the Vietnamese psyche, where if you had a childhood where everything is so well-defined for you, to becoming American, where you move about.... I think it does something to your soul."

Lam, twenty-eight, has spent more than half his life in the US. He left Saigon on April 29, 1975, the day before it fell. He once wrote that "Americans did indeed win the [Vietnam] War," because of the eagerness with which Viets (both here and in Southeast Asia) are swallowing capitalism. "It struck me as always being that creating from minimalism is the Vietnamese soul," he says, "but, of course, when you get to America, what's the point? I talked to one kid who made a living for the longest time scavenging for paper in

Saigon. And so, when I took him to Berkeley, where I went to school, and he saw all these huge trash bins with all discarded papers and everything, and he's like, 'Oh, my God, back home this is my living, my living for two months.' So there's no sense of [minimalism] right now. We can shrug off all that and embrace the immediate."

Pow! Minute Rice. Microwaveability. "For them to come to America with an established Little Saigon and seeing other Vietnamese well-off means they want instant gratification," Lam says. "It's very influential, the American dream. I think the problem is that, in the rush of trying to get all that without the necessary backing of values and education, the only tactic, really, is to join gangs," he says, adding that a Viet gang had robbed his friend's neighbors two days previously. "In this country, it's a strange thing, but excessiveness becomes more of a characteristic of Vietnamese-Americans than anything else. You go to a Vietnamese wedding and you see how decked-out everybody is, the women in wonderful bouquets, and some even wear a tiara, and they drive Mercedes-Benzes and Jaguars. In some way, it is a way of saying [this is] a reward for all that suffering, I suppose. But it goes unrestrained. It's so easy to rob, because these kids dress well, they come in somewhere in the middle of the wedding of three hundred people, they follow whoever has a lot of money home. They have walkie-talkies, and they follow whoever has the most diamonds.... It's all keeping up with the Joneses, and it becomes pathetic, because in some ways, the American dream becomes more like an American nightmare."

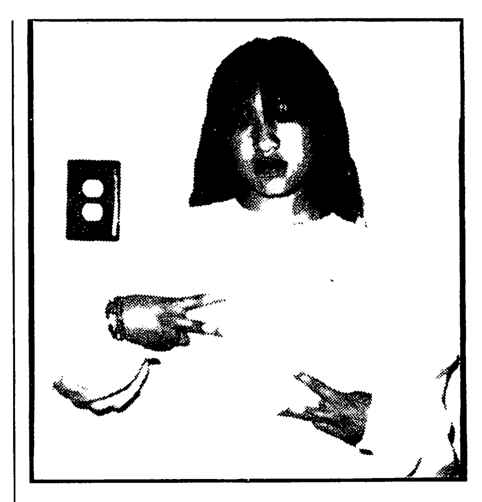
Silk-shirted Vietnamese kids jerk arrhythmically on the dance floor, generating a cloud of designer cologne. Johnny-O, the club owner, wears pop-bottle glasses and a baggy olive suit. He polices the front door, flanked by two black security guards with metal detectors. Johnny don't take no mess.

"They [gangs] spread the rumor they will stop by on the weekend to shoot the people who come here, to try to scare my customers," he says, as if biting into a lime. "They just try to intimidate me. They say, 'Hey, guy, we stop by tonight with guns.' When I resist them, they all the time tell me, 'You will see your time, man.'"

He hates gangs, and the feeling's mutual. One crew vandalized his car three times. They tried to set it afire the fourth time, but they torched the wrong vehicle. A few months back, they stabbed someone in Johnny's parking lot. On separate nights, they've followed him, his wife, and his sister home, demanding protection money. Johnny recently moved his family into a new apartment. "I tell you—you cannot be polite to these people," he says. "If you are polite, they'll think you are afraid of them." Johnny's the exception, a Viet who reports everything to the police.

His pregnant wife, almost a head taller than Johnny, seems disgusted. "A lot of these kids, I think, have an identity crisis," she says. "I don't think they do it for the money. These aren't homeless kids. They have lots of money. I think they do it for thrills."

Johnny left Vietnam in 1975, ricocheting from Paris to Orange County. "One thing about American culture is violence," he says. "I tell my wife I don't want to buy toy



guns for my kids." He refuses entry to a snazzy pair of males wearing pointy, steel-tipped shoes. "I think the Vietnamese are not a violent society," Johnny says. "They see too many violent movies here, and to get a gun is too easy. That's influenced them a lot. [The current street price in Orange County for Uzis and AK-47s is about a hundred and fifty dollars, less than the cost of a half-ounce of sinsemilla or a cheap VCR.]...And they don't have parents, they don't have relatives to control them. They step a little bit into the movie." A pink-faced Westminster cop plays Rambo outside, slapping a metal flashlight in his palm and heckling Viet teens.

Johnny's seen a few movies himself. "I don't call people like these gangsters 'cold,'" he says. "I call them crazy. They try to chop-chop-BANG! They try to beat people's families.... But if they try to rob me at home, they'd better be fast. And if they try to hurt my baby, I will show them like Chuck Bronson in *Death Wish*."

One of Johnny's rejects sits outside the club on a coin-operated kiddie ride. Johnny's not too popular, eh? "Yeah, he's popular," says the kid, rocking back and forth on a toy airplane. "He's *real* popular. He's the number-one man on the hit list."



Minh, twenty-two, is a junkie gangbanger who always wears long sleeves. His right eye was cracked with a baseball bat years ago in a gang scuffle. Permanently ruptured, it's a milky, motionless grey marble. His good eye looks straight into mine, but the other one's somewhere else, someplace far off.

Minh (not his real name) belongs to one of the "Boyz" clubs mentioned earlier. A hyperkinetic chain-smoker with a honking voice, he's annoyingly likeable. Minh's a bit

old for street bangin', but he's got a rep as a loose cannon, a ruthless fuck. Nothing scares him. "A lot of people think that talking to Americans is talking to undercover FBI," he says, standing between two stone lions at the Asian Garden Mall. "I ain't worried about it, you know? I don't take any shit from anybody. I can take care of my*self*."

He says gang members are cultural boat people floating in limbo. "They don't feel Vietnamese and they don't feel American. They're somewhere in between. They come over here with no parents, they try to go to work and to go to school, but they say, 'Fuck it,' you know? 'Let's play the American game.' So I came here, I met the wrong people, and I slide down and down. That's why I'm trying to go up now." Criminally inactive (or so he says), Minh's thinking about going straight.

He laughs and lights a butt when asked why he joined a gang. "It's not a gang," he says, exhaling smoke. "It's a 'group.' It's a bunch of guys who get together. But if one of them is bad, the rest will follow, and they'll start doing bad things. I was just hanging around one day, and before I knew it, I was *in* it. I don't need people to go with me if I want to rob a bank. I'll go in with a machine gun and hold up the place my*self*."

Minh's fresh out of the pen after clocking a sentence for a commercial robbery where the store owner was shot. Minh even did a little time in Vietnam. "Compared to jail over there, jail over here ain't shit," he says. "I'd rather do ten years here than one year in a Vietnamese jail. Especially if you're under eighteen here. You get a nice bed, three meals a day. They take care of everything. It's easy."

Pretend-bored Viet chicks stroll by in lobster-colored makeup. Minh's eye wanders. A pained Vietnamese woman scuttles across white linoleum, asking people if they've seen her runaway daughter. "The parents in Vietnam are very strict," Minh says. "The parents come over here, and they want to be strict like in Vietnam. They want us to bow, to obey. But it's different over here.... If the parents are too hard on them, they say, 'Fuck it. Fuck you,' you know, and they *go*." Minh's tastes run toward tailored clothes, fine food, and constant travel, scarce items in Vietnam. "You have to respect [the parents], but they don't know what's going on. This is America, so we don't listen to them. Freedom, you know?"

Freedom. Fun and freedom. Freedom



and fun. Stumble into a gaudy Westminster club through a wooden-bead curtain, past a small Buddhist shrine. Rainbow lasers lacerate the smoky room. Beneath a spinning mirrored ball, a girl sings over recorded tracks. An MC follows with jokes in Vietnamese, then a performer who can only be described as Robert Goulet by way of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A woman, her hair sprayed and pulled into a spiky black hydra, slinks up to my table. She calls herself Madame Le and wants to know why I'm there. Just stretchin' my toes, I tell her, but she doesn't buy it. She summons a linebacker-sized white man, who grins cunningly and sits across the table, saying nothing. Madame Le rubs up against me. Uh, no squid tonight, thanks. Too much sweat, too much gut-searing Vietnamese coffee. I retreat.

Madame Le's business cards sit near the cash register in a pastry shop down the road. She kneels near flowers in a glossy color photo, looking as innocent as a pit viper can possibly look. She's an entertainer, perhaps? "No, she's the club owner," says the cashier, blushing like a schoolboy. "She's not a singer, but she knows how to do *business*. Hee, hee!" Police later tell me she runs pussy, heroin, and firearms. The American dream!

You weren't hoping for a happy ending, were you? "Everything, basically, has increased," says Orange County Deputy Probation Officer Bob Gates. "The numbers, the violence, the mobility. They're more sophisticated in all those aspects.... They're very good students with regard to criminal behavior. They tend not to make similar mistakes twice."

Unlike Americans. Remember the murderous *Marielitos*, Castro's "gift" to Miami? In January, 1990, a mellowing Vietnamese government began releasing political prisoners from communist "re-education camps." Thirty thousand ex-cons and their families, about a hundred thousand Viets all told, are on a waiting list for American citizenship. An estimated two hundred thousand more are waiting to get on the waiting list. Experts guess that forty percent of the new immigrants will wind up in Orange County. Culturally awkward upon arrival, they'll be gullible targets of gang intimidation. Their sons and daughters are potential gang recruits.

Tran's been in Orange County only nine months. He was one of the first political prisoners to be released. His nose, like his homeland, swerves left and right in an 'S' shape. A gang of communist jail guards broke it back in the late seventies. He never got it fixed.

Shortly after arriving in the US, Tran (another Viet-*nom de plume*) wrote a poem called "A Fairy Tale," dedicated to boat people killed at sea before they reached America. He gave me a xeroxed copy, altered only by a thick crust of white-out covering his real name. This is an excerpt:

Millions of Vietnamese have passed by
Most of them have died
Some in fishes' stomachs
Some tied in bags
Some scattered all around
Others' legs and hands bound
In many different positions, indeed
But only one purpose altogether they meet
That is, FLEEING FOR FREEDOM.

"In Vietnam," Tran says, "in the restaurants on the walls, they have big letters, 'THE WALLS CAN HEAR YOU, SO BE QUIET.'... If you tell a small lie, the people won't believe you. But if you tell a big lie again and again, they'll believe it."

He's incensed that communists rule Vietnam and prays for the day when they're overthrown by force. Like many American Viets, he doesn't want the US to establish ties with 'Nam until the Marxists are tossed out. "Now I think the communists are longing to make good relations with the United States government because they are dying," Tran says. "They are collapsed. If we wait, we don't need to make friends with a man who is lying on the bed and waiting for death to come."

America's Vietnamese population is still tweaky about THE WAR. There are too many raw nerves in their neighborhood and too many guns. Most exiled Viets are staunch anti-communists and chafe at open political discussion, especially if it's leftist. Outspoken Viet-magazine editors have been rubbed out gangland-style in California, Texas, and Virginia. Viets take their politics verrrry seriously.

Trouble is, a fraction of American Viets are sworn communists or communist sympathizers. "They are dead people," Tran says. "They have no mind.... There were some people who dared to say something supporting the communist government. They were shot. In contrary, there were some who said something anti-communist. They were shot, too." Sound familiar? The issues aren't much different from seventeen years ago. If the two sides go at it, get ready for another movie sequel: *Vietnam War II—This Time, the Turf is American.*

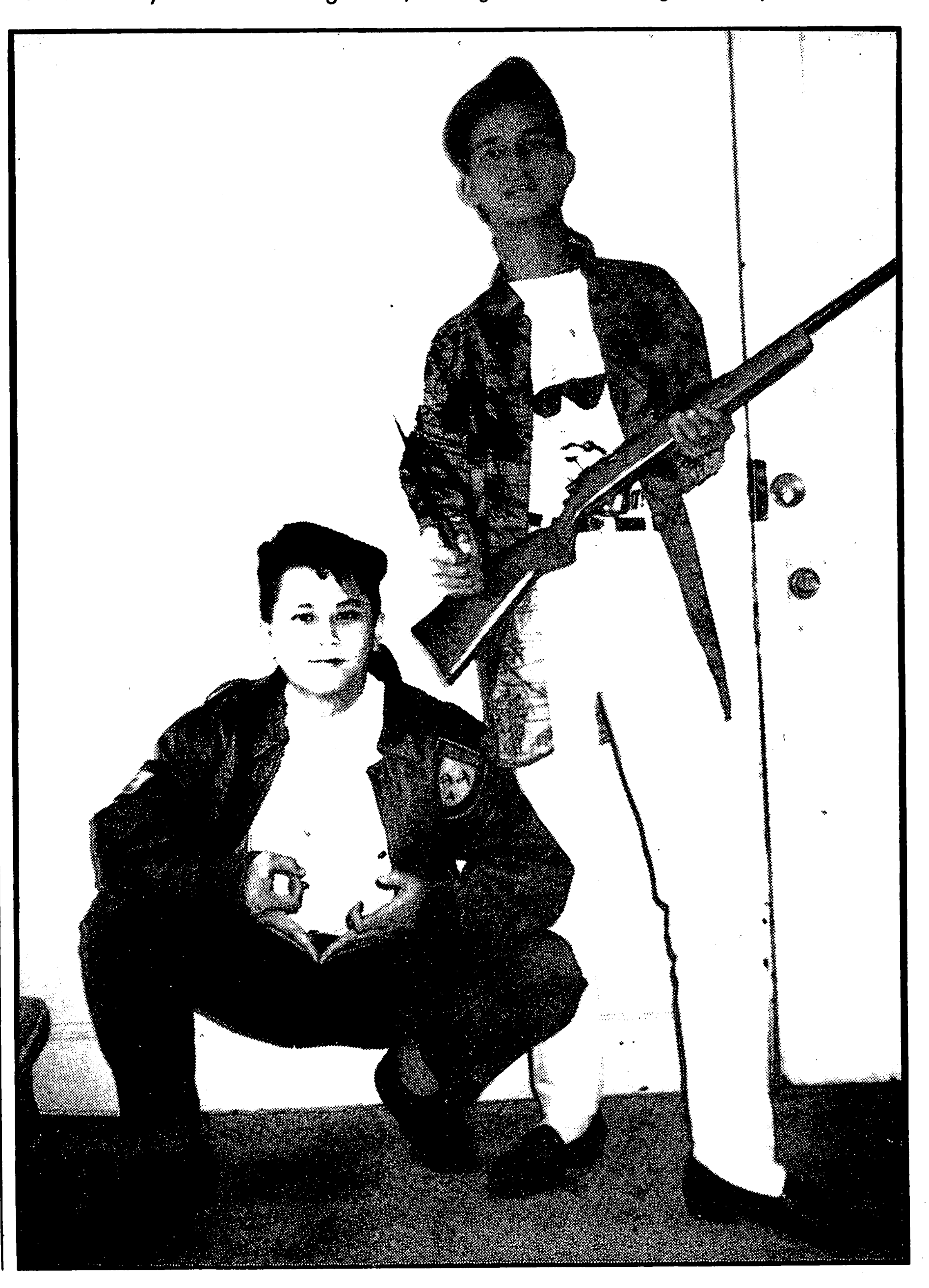
The kids on the streets are a generation removed from Tran's little war. They speak better English than their parents. At school, they learn to view their ethnicity as a millstone. Aching to assimilate, they acquire a distaste for all things Vietnamese. They lash out at other Viets, burying their heritage in an avalanche of rage.

In the United States, it's easy to run away. You can change your name and address, even your face. Minh the one-eyed gangster recently bought himself a glass eyeball. He can't see any better, but people stopped looking at him like he's a freak.

Young Viets are media babies. Orphaned or neglected by their parents, they hang together and immerse themselves in a thrill-a-minute combination of Disneyland and Armageddon, a world where war and leisure are synonymous. Gangs learn to solve their problems like John Wayne did.

"Because of the freedom of America—sometimes I feel it's crazy," Tran says. "Your government and newspapers and TV and cinema—it's so violent! I even watch sometimes on TV, and I feel something sucking me in. Sometimes even *I'm* affected by the violent film," he says, his upper lip twitching. "Even my nephews [and] cousins see films and go, 'That was a good film. The guns shot really *fast*.'... They imitate. The violence is all around us." ■

Written by J.G., this article originally appeared in Playboy *in a newsier, less self-indulgent form. He signed a contract forcing him to tell you this.*





¡MUERTE!

Mexican Murder Mags Let it Bleed

If homicide equals entertainment, the Mexican murder mags are the hardest-working 'zines in show biz. In their brutal, gore-venerating implication that dying brings us all together, they constitute the true alternative press. They embody everything which defines high-quality journalism: screaming graphics, shameless exploitation, and the unflinching eroticization of death.

On Tijuana's dusty *avenidas*, amid the auto shops, tequila bars, and three-year-olds selling Chiclets, we snagged seventeen different bloody editions within a few hours. Weekly publications, they cost an average of two thousand pesos (about seventy cents), but wily newsstand owners charge gringos a buck. It's still a bargain. Like *ANSWER Me!*, most of these journals have the good taste to include an exclamation point (or two) in their titles: *El Nuevo Alarma!* (The New Alarm!); *¡Custodia!* (Custody!); *¡Peligro!* (Danger!); *Nota Roja* (Red Note); *Enlace!* (Connection!); and *Alerta* (On the Alert). But you don't need an interpreter to appreciate them—if anything, their impact is heightened by the language barrier. They're the best type of magazine, the kind you don't have to read to enjoy.

Most of them benefit from Grade-Z production values. Printed on toilet-paper-quality rag with smudgy ink, they feature copper staples, grainy photos, and obvious paste-up marks. The color shots usually have skewed registration, causing the magenta, yellow, and cyan to clumsily overlap for full squeamish effect.

Their closest American corollary is *True Detective* and its ilk, but what the Anglos only hint at, the Mexicans display with the brazen glee of a mutilated exhibitionist. And they have the *cojones* to put the most gruesome shots on the cover. They cut through the shit, literally!

Their pages are soaked with oceans of hemoglobin, a stew of body parts where nothing (except sex) is left to the imagination. Carcasses are shown mashed to the consistency of tomato paste, but the editors show a Catholic sense of restraint by placing black bars over breasts and genitalia. Gored-to-the-bone faces submit to agonizing close-ups. Eyeballs dangle from their sockets. Skeletal remains lie in piles. Blood bubbles from newly dead mouths. Blackened skulls swarm with maggots. Half-corpses sprawl on apartment floors, their purple entrails spilling onto the tan carpet. The red stuff gushes from an open cranium onto the sidewalk, trickling past a discarded Pepsi can. Dead families lie on a bed with numbered cards suggesting the order in which they were killed. The human debris of train and car wrecks lies scattered like gum wrappers. Bound-and-gagged victims of the Mexican Mafia float in swamps. Heads are stitched up like baseballs in preparation for burial. Morgue shot after morgue shot reveals crushed foreheads and crimson-splotched sheets. Scowling and unkempt, the crimes' perpetrators wield machetes and automatic pistols, staring at the reader with cold brown eyes. In other words, it's nonstop fun from cover to cover!

The non-gore content is likewise meat-based, with equal doses of cheesecake and beefcake. Painted ladies in fishnets and miniskirts adorn crossword puzzles and centerfolds. Some are flabbily topless—*la muchachita sexy!* The masked heroes of *lucha libre* (wrestling) bulge through spandex costumes, their bulky bodies framed with cut-out marks so you can create flimsy trading cards. Most of the mags feature a "people" section, with glitzy photos of Mexican and American celebrities in hyper-real colors. Ads tout muscle-building manuals and sexual-vitality enhancers.

Though all of the same breed, the mags differ subtly from one to the next. *Alarma!* is generally the most pulverizingly graphic. On the other end, *¡Custodia!* allots far too much space to the living. *Nota Roja* specializes in murder comic strips and skanky chicks—their rule seems to be guts on the front cover, bikinis on the back. *Alerta,* like *Nota Roja,* is crappily printed—it seems as if its black-and-white pictures were grafted from some static-choked UHF channel. *Enlace!* is big on Mexican-history essays. The helpful *¡Peligro!* ran a piece giving step-by-step instructions for building an outhouse.

If the declining Roman Empire had a press, this would be it—a meat-grinding menu of murder, glam, blood, sex, and machismo. Is it any wonder that Mexicans do death better than anyone else? Mexico is a cultural colony, buried under Spanish imperialism and hovered over by paler northern powers. The Aztecs and Mayans remain ghosts, roaming unnoticed over its flat, hot wastelands. Death is woven into everyday life, an object of worship, a wistful reminder of faded glories. Our neighbors to the south certainly aren't more perverse than us, maybe just a tad more honest. Mexican murder mags are the final word on everyone's final chapter. ■





HEY, DIDJA GET THE NEW ALBUM BY CRYPTIC IMBECILES?

It's been, oh, fifteen years since rock 'n' roll did anything new, and at least that long since rock groups exhausted every favorable linguistic combination when naming themselves. We are left with a dead genre and thousands of stupidly named bands. Most hundred-and-third-generation punk combos choose polysyllabic monikers in what seem like cute attempts at home-grown psychedelia. Their names are supposed to be evocative, but they wind up sounding embarrassingly dumb. Since we're certain that in their dearth of creativity, rock 'n' rollers will soon be unable even to give themselves *bad* names, we're suggesting a few of our own:

★ *Horseturd* ★ *Fragile Dildo* ★ *Limbic Pottage* ★ *Cat Saliva*
★ *My Mom's Thermonuclear Diaphragm* ★ *Pancreas of Newt*
★ *The Anal Few* ★ *Very Allergic* ★ *Cardboard Funeral*
★ *Swallowing Gerbils* ★ *Sacred Daughters of Vaginismus*
★ *Ovarian Earring* ★ *Soviet Acupuncture* ★ *Eyeball Forest*
★ *Ginseng Notebook* ★ *Booger Knapsack* ★ *Static Lozenge*
★ *Mucus Sandwich* ★ *Nigerian Mold Spore* ★ *Garlick Fartz*

As we go to press, the trend seems to be toward one-word names, many of them dealing with household items or bodily functions. Our entrants:

★ *Milk* ★ *Ear* ★ *Rim* ★ *Corn* ★ *Pud* ★ *Lip* ★ *Soup* ★ *Flab*

Feel free to use any of these names when forming *your* band. We'll *sue* your ass, but feel free.

Make Me LAUGH, You Impish Bastard

Clown's entertain both young and old. But underneath the flashy garb, kooky makeup, and wacky hair, they'r people, too—thus verbally inept, uncreative, and startlingly inarticulate!
Debbie called up a few professional stooges and stated:

"I've heard that you're a clown. Make me laugh."

Not one chuckle emerged from her lips. The city burns, our hearts are broken, and Emmett Kelly rots i his grave. *[Note: Since clowns can be rather vengeful, we've changed the names.]*

Stinky the Clown: Well, I don't do that. I do a lot of physical humor, you know. I don't tell jokes per se. I d magic, juggling, puppets, [and] unicycling. It's a full show. It's about a forty-five, fifty-minute show. It's or hundred and fifty dollars, and I bring about eight thousand dollars' worth of equipment. So you're getting a fu variety show.

Rocky the Amazing Clown: OK. I do magic and face-painting and balloon animals. I do a lot of magic. . . . use live animals in my act, a live rabbit. . . . You got me on the spot there. Let's see. Oh, let's see. What get me going is when I'm with the audience and I'm performing and I'm doing the magic. . . . I could do a real good stand-up. I could do an adult party, but in the children's type of way. Like, OK, I call you up, right, and pu a clown wig on you, right, and then you do a magic routine with me. Now there's no way people aren't gonn laugh! . . . OK, for one hour, OK, with the live rabbit, if you want the live rabbit, it's ninety-five dollars fo one hour.

Toni the Clown: Oh, I don't tell jokes, though, as a clown. . . . I work with the children and I make *the* laugh by being goofy and zany and silly. It's, like, all in my face. And I do fun things for the children. I c face-painting and balloon animals and a parachute and a tunnel. . . . I do silly games, like, we do the AB game. . . . We pretend everyone's horses, and we do little animals, like, pretending they're bunny rabbits ar stuff. . . . I have music where, like, "OK, everybody do dancing." And then we do dance games. I do a limb where the kids go under a limbo, and a parachute where they keep the ball inside. . . . Do you want a clow that does stand-up comedy? I don't know any clowns that do stand-up.

Xuxa the Clown: I am a clown. That is true. Make you laugh immediately? . . . Wow! I'm sorry, I don't kno if I can do that. You caught me off guard. But I *really* know how to make the *kids* laugh a *lot*. I do a mag show, face-painting, animal balloons, and games. And I *am* pretty silly.

Mr. Shlomo: Make you laugh? . . . Well, offhand, I can't think of anything. *[Debbie: Aren't you a clown* Yes, I am. *[Well, don't you have a joke that you tell?]* I don't tell jokes. I do magic and juggling. *[No jokes?]* N jokes. But the kids enjoy it. Yes, they laugh. I've been doing it for forty years, so I should know what I' doing! . . . I'll give you a number to call. His name is Sleazy the Clown.

Sleazy the Clown: Oh, you called Mr. Shlomo yesterday! Well, you know, mainly I entertain children wi routines, so I can't guarantee that I can make you laugh. *[You want to try?]* No, I don't want to try. I can giv you information about my show if you're seriously interested in having a clown. . . . You know, clowns deper on costume, makeup, movement, and a variety of things, so we can't make you laugh on the phone. All thos things go together to make people laugh and have a good time.

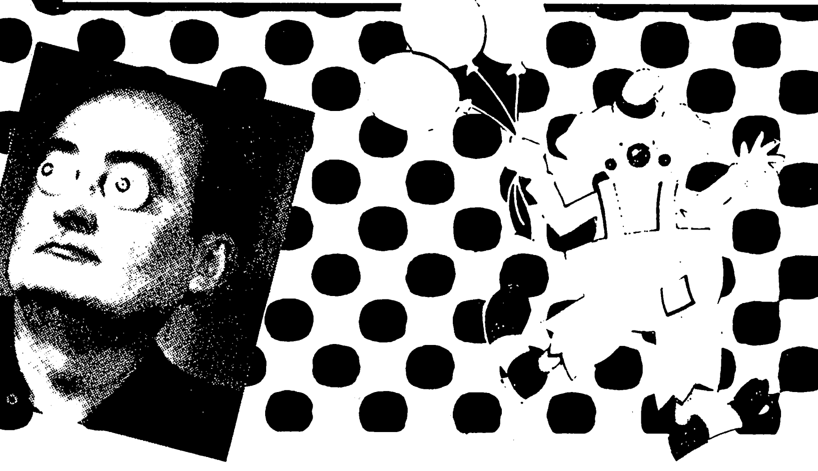
Kimba the Clown: OK. I really don't tell the kids jokes. I make up jokes with them as they go along. I de with the kids. Like, they start talking about my shoes and my feet, like when I wear my big shoes. One little k said, "You're not a real clown!" I'm like, "You're not a real kid!" He says, "That's not your real hair," and said, like, "That's not *your* real hair." He says, "Take that wig off." And I say, "If you take off *your* wig, I'll tak off mine," and he says, "That's your *real* hair?" I don't know. I don't really have a stand-up thing where I g out and have set jokes, because every single party is different.

Depresso the Clown: Make what? How can I make you laugh? Are you ticklish? . . . I took th ninety-year-old woman out last week, and she took her teeth out and I took mine out. There was so muc suction, it took four people to pull us apart!

Molesto the Angry Clown: Do you want magic, or do you want humor? . . . I do a half-hour magic show. use the children in the act. I make candy [appear] by magic for them, and I use two or three of them to com up and help me during the routine. And I do the one-balloon animals for all the children. I'm there about a hour, and I charge a hundred and seventy-five dollars.

Adolf the Clown: Over the phone? *[Yeah.]* No. Most of my clowning that I do is physical entertainmen first of all. I mean, it's a lot of physical things, plus as well as a magic show that I do is more of comedy-magic show that relies heavily on the props as well as the patter line, and thirdly, I'm not really i character as Adolf the Clown at the moment. You know, once I put on the makeup and the costume and th wig, etc., etc., then I more *become* Adolf the Clown, and it's much easier to make someone laugh in perso than it is over the phone. I'm not a stand-up comedian. . . . I do give discounts on the weekdays, and also, depends on how long I'm going to be there and where you're located. I charge according to the amount c time I'm there, not by what I do. But you can figure rates run anywhere from seventy-five up to about tw hundred dollars. . . . Would you like me to send you a picture?

Sunburst the Premenstrual Clown: Make me laugh? I don't get it. I don't do auditions over the phone *[Long pause. Baby is heard screaming "Mommy!" in the background.]* I DON'T DO AUDITIONS OVER TH PHONE! OK?! *[Hangs up.]*





The DEVIL in Disguise

Over half the American public believes that Satan is a real person posing a serious threat to society. Psychologists have carved careers out of deprogramming demonically possessed souls.

Well, if anyone's possessed by Satan, it's us. Posing as "Jane Smith," a New York waitress, Debbie called up professionals nationwide and claimed:

"I'm possessed by Satan, and frankly, I'm getting a little tired of it."

When pressed for details, she told them that she barks like a dog, wakes up with bruises, suddenly begins speaking in Greek and Latin, scratches herself until she bleeds, has visions of the number '666' and of Satan screaming at her, and occasionally levitates from her bed. Here are the "expert" responses:

Dr. Kirkpatrick (private deprogrammer): You can come in for a consultation. Our rates are one hundred and five [dollars] an hour.

Victims Hotline: Well, I don't think you're demon-possessed, OK? That's first. *[Debbie: Why is that?]* Well, I just don't think you are. *[Is there a Satan? There IS a Satan!]* I don't really get into if there is or isn't a Satan. I know that *I* saw things when I was being abused by the people that believed in Satan and worshipped him. You know, I saw things that I thought were demons and spirits, and maybe they weren't. It really doesn't matter. *[What did you see?]* I saw spirits and demons. The ones *I* saw were black. *[Negroes?]* No, they weren't Negroes. They were just, like, black. I don't know how to explain it. Sort of like a ghost you see on television. But I don't think you're demon-possessed.... What it sounds like to me is that you're having flashbacks. That you're having flashbacks of when you were a child. Because they do speak in other languages. Satanic cult members speak in other languages so people outside their group cannot understand it.... I don't think Satan is after you. I think that what you're having are memories about something that happened to you as a child. Because those are the same kind of things that I went through, and I've spoken to over five hundred people that have called with the same thing.

The Cook House: The first thing you should do is head out, you know, for a complete physical, and rule out, you know, anything physical other than psychological, you know, may be going on, and then perhaps get in touch with the Cult Awareness Network people in your area who could help you out, as far as some exit counseling or some preliminary work, and then if you're needing some follow-up to that, then we can talk about that later.

Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center: Well, there are various ways we can open the door to Satan, and I believe the world is often controlled by Satan. I believe that, going back to the Old Testament, that Satan does have charge of the world at this particular point in time.... A pastor that I'm familiar with does have the gift of, I believe, if indeed it is a Satanic possession, there would need to be some sort of ritual or some sort of something involved.

Calvary Chapel: How are you doing? You're possessed by Satan?... Have you ever accepted Jesus Christ into your heart? *[I'm Jewish.]* You do believe that Jesus Christ is the messiah, or no?... The only one that can take away a possession, that has the power to cast Satan away, is Jesus Christ. *[I hang up and call back ten minutes later, asking: "What can Jesus Christ do for me?"]* OK. You know what? I was fully praying when I got off the phone, because I thought you got discouraged and hung up.... Praise God. I go, "Lord, please let her call back." Isaiah 53. I'll read it to you. *[He reads from Isaiah 53, a passage about the messiah.]* I can offer you some advice. You can take it or leave it. In the New Testament, and this is Jesus, the power in his name alone was the only thing that was able to cast demons away. They feared him. And the New Testament talks about a man possessed by demons, and he went out and cast the demons out, and they knew him by name, and they said, "What do you have to do with us? Why don't you leave us alone?" They asked him if they could just be cast into a herd of pigs, and [Jesus] said, "Fine. Go." And he cast the demons into these pigs, and they went insane, and they drowned themselves in the sea. And all through the New Testament it talks about him casting out demons, and the apostles cast out demons in Jesus's name.... I personally used to dabble with that kind of stuff, you know, the stuff you're talking about. When I was younger, I had friends that were really into witchcraft and stuff, and I've seen possessions, and I've seen really crazy things happen, but when I gave my life to the Lord, none of that stuff ever happened again. You know, it's not a religion. I'm not telling you to get religious. I'm telling you to get real, OK?

His Mansion: OK. Would you like to pray right now? We can at least start that way. *[OK.]* Father, in the name of Jesus—what is your name? *[Jane.]* Father, I just ask that you make yourself known to Jane in a very real and deep way. Father, you see the affliction, and you know that she's experiencing it in a way that I don't. God, you know the root of it. You know the reality of it. And Father, I ask that you have mercy on Jane, that you free her from the sins that have come upon her and set her free. Father, I ask that you know that the kingdom of God has come, and that the kingdom of Satan is being destroyed by you. Father, I ask that your son is the king and that he rules over Satan. That he has the power to bind the strong men and set the captive free. Father, I ask that you guide Jane to people that can help her, that can minister to her and bring deliverance to her life, and that she should know that you are a compassionate God who has mercy upon those who call in his name. I ask this in Jesus's name.... Well, what do you think can be done at this point? What would you like to see happen in your life? *[I don't know.]* Are you familiar at all with Jesus? *[No, I'm Jewish.]* I understand that. So is Jesus. So is Jesus.

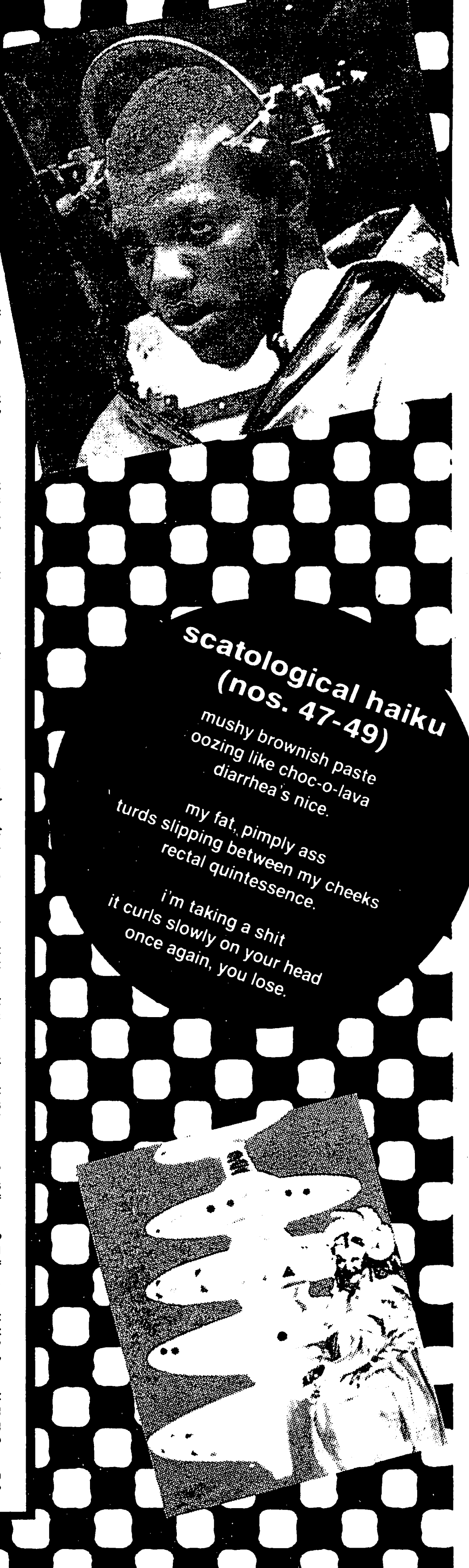
Columbine Center for the Treatment of Dissociative Disorders: Have you called here before? *[No.]* You haven't. OK. I was just wondering, because somebody had a similar situation that they reported.... How much is it impacting your life? Like, are ya able to work? *[No.]* How do you think we can be helpful? *[You tell me.]* Well, one of the things that we can do is offer you an assessment.... There's no charge for that. There's no obligation, but it would give us an opportunity to sort of size up what would be helpful for ya.

Spiritual Dimensions in Victim Services: Wow. Have you been going to any kind of a therapist? *[It seems no one can help me.]* Have you gone places to get help? *[I've tried different shrinks.]* Have you tried churches? *[No.]* That would be a good place to go. They're on the side of Jesus Christ. And if you go to a church and ask for some prayer, you can probably get rid of him. The church can counteract the demon inside of you. I can give you the name of a pastor who might be able to help you. His name is Jeff Jones. And you might tell him that I asked you to go see him.

Bob Larson Hopeline Ministries: Well, you might want to go to a doctor about the voices.... I would caution you against a self-diagnosis of being demon-possessed. That could be a harmful thing in itself for you to be living your life thinking that demons are in ya.... Do you go to a church? *[I'm Jewish.]* Do you go to a synagogue? *[Years ago, I went.]* Are you on SSI? *[No.]* Do you take medication? *[No. No drugs.]* So, what do you know about Jesus Christ? *[I don't know.]* Nothing? How come you know so much about Satan?

Cottonwood: Don't like that, huh? It does get kind of tiring. It gets harder to each one. He wants you to do it, and you don't really want to do it.... So, where ya calling from? *[New York.]* There's a lot of that stuff going on around there, huh? Dag heavens!... I think it would be a good thing for you to contact a therapist. Some of them will understand what you're talking about, and some of them won't. So, if you get one that first off, you know, thinks you're just **making up stuff**, then just go ahead and try another one, OK?

Rick Ross (private deprogrammer): Who is this? *[My name is Jane.]* It sounds to me, Jane, like you're either fronting for a cult group or this is a prank call. *[No. This is not a prank call.]* Would you have anything to do with a skinhead organization?



scatological haiku (nos. 47-49)

mushy brownish paste
oozing like choc-o-lava
diarrhea's nice.

my fat, pimply ass
turds slipping between my cheeks
rectal quintessence.

i'm taking a shit
it curls slowly on your head
once again, you lose.

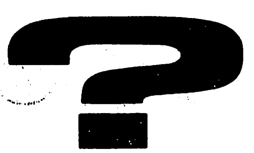
We’re

BACK.

Are you going to

KILL

yourself, or do we have to do it for you





NO.3
$3.50
ANSWER
Me!
SUICIDE
FREAKS
GUNS!
PERVERTS



NUMBER THREE

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MEIN FRAU!

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[redacted]

Overseas orders: Add $2 to the above prices and get rid of that stupid accent.

Write for information about our International Capitalist Outreach, including *ANSWER Me!* products such as T-shirts and suicide kits. Debbie's used tampons are available signed and mounted for $15 each.

All material is for informational purposes only. Blame no one but yourself if you choose to commit suicide. Since we promote equal-opportunity hatred, charges of antisemitism will be ignored. Debbie's Jewish, and the horns on her head prove it.

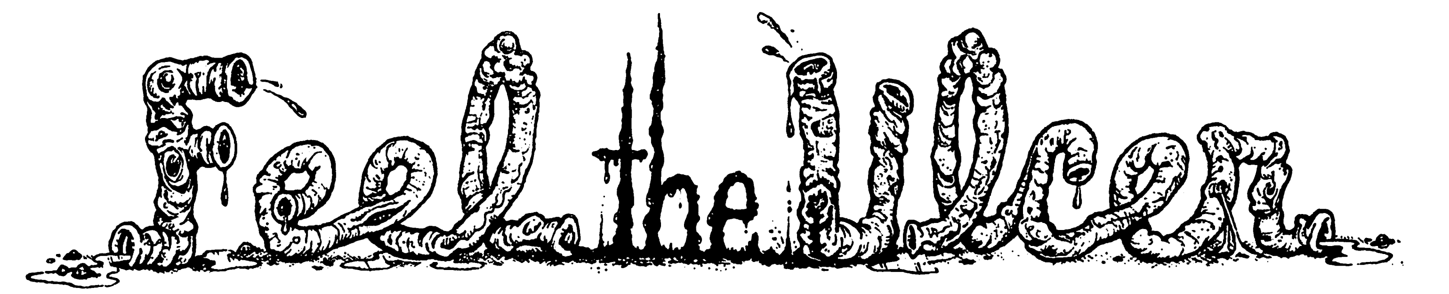
new WADS

SHIT-TALKERS

TIRADES

MAGGOT JOURNALISM

DEBBIE GOAD WROTE ALL THE TIRADES AND PLACED THE PRANK CALLS. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL REMAINING ARTICLES WERE WRITTEN BY THE MAN WHOSE HOOD ORNAMENT SHE POLISHES.



Feel the Ulcer

It's you again. I've been watching you for weeks. You walk this way every day, toting your grease-stained bag of pastries. The dogs look up when they see you, knowing you'll throw them some day-old cookies.

You could take the main streets home, but this is your foray off the beaten path, your sole eccentric indulgence. Being here makes you feel dangerous. As you get nearer, I hear you humming. It's a soft, airy sound which floats dreamily through your happy, ice-cream world.

Then I strike, and the humming stops. I'm on you like a dam bursting open on a small town. I'm all around you, and you can't get away.

Trapped. A hundred centipede limbs flail at you. To your head, to your ribs, to your mouth. Smooth and blunt into your guts. Hammers, pistons, missiles. I claw into your hair and hold tightly. **SMACK!** goes your head into a brick wall. **CRUNCH!** go your teeth against a steel railing. **OOFF!** goes my knee, hard and fast into your nose. Your mouth hangs, your eyes roll, and you stagger backward. **CRACK!** goes your skull as it kisses the ground, and a warm red puddle spreads out around it.

I pump my hatred into you like it's a thick load of cum. I carpet-bomb you with cold, angry pain. I dismantle and rebuild you in the image of my anger.

You distantly mumble, and my elbow drops straight into your stomach. The louder you whine, the harder I hit. *Unnhhh*... **THWACK!** Shut up! *Ohhh*... **THUDD!** Shut your fucking hole! My boot sails nimbly into your ear. **RRINNNG!** Hear the church bells tinkle like a thousand bright-blue Easter Sundays. Red spikes throb along your circuitry, rolling through with army-battalion precision. Each kick clears out your mind. Now you're not moving. I *like* that. You're too weak to make a peep, your mouth a toilet bowl of blood and vomit.

I straddle your contorted mass. Hot piss, iridescent in the feeble sunlight, splats onto your forehead. You look hilarious. Such an asshole, so ugly. Violated, humiliated, vanquished.... Snail. Roach. Sea crab.

First time you've been down in your life, eh? You had no problems, huh? Now you do. You blame yourself for each shortcoming, each lie you've told yourself and believed until now. You feel a hot, sour shame for every hair on your body. Your self-esteem dissolves into the ground. The sky slams shut in your face.

You don't like it, but you don't have any say in it, do you? Your life is a tape in rewind, and I erase all the good parts. Now *I* tell your story, ghostwrite your autobiography. I've stolen you. You look for the peace, the calm continuity, but I've stolen you.

Your cells are soaked in my bitterness. Your bones will always remember the pain I've inflicted. I crouch deep inside your spine, down at the base. Slowly, quietly, you'll start to think like me. You won't be able to stop it, as much as you grind your jaws and punch at the walls to be rid of me. It makes you insane to realize that I own you. I've put your mind in a sling, rubbed a little black smudge on your soul.

But—tee, hee—I won't kill you. I'd rather that you live a long, crippled life. I take your money, but money's not important. Our relationship is. Smooch, smooch—think of me often.

Your face swells like dough in an oven. The welts rise bold and purple. The blood cakes into brownish flakes. In a few minutes, your family will start to miss you. They pour the beverages, check the clock, stroke the dog. How delighted they'll be when they finally see you.

I must admit I'm excited. To be honest, I feel like a million bucks. My heart pumps wild river rapids. Pure voltage shoots up my back. My muscles are fat sausages pushing through their tight skin casing. Sweat rolls off me like water on car wax. All's right with the world.

But the phlegm-colored sun is dripping down out of sight. I'd love to stay and chat all night, but I guess it's time to go. Puzzled, the dogs are barking. I scoop up your greasy brown bag and look inside. Sugared frosting lurches off the pastries like candle drippings. I walk slowly down this dirty alley, throwing crumbs to the animals.



Signed in my own blood,
Jim Goad

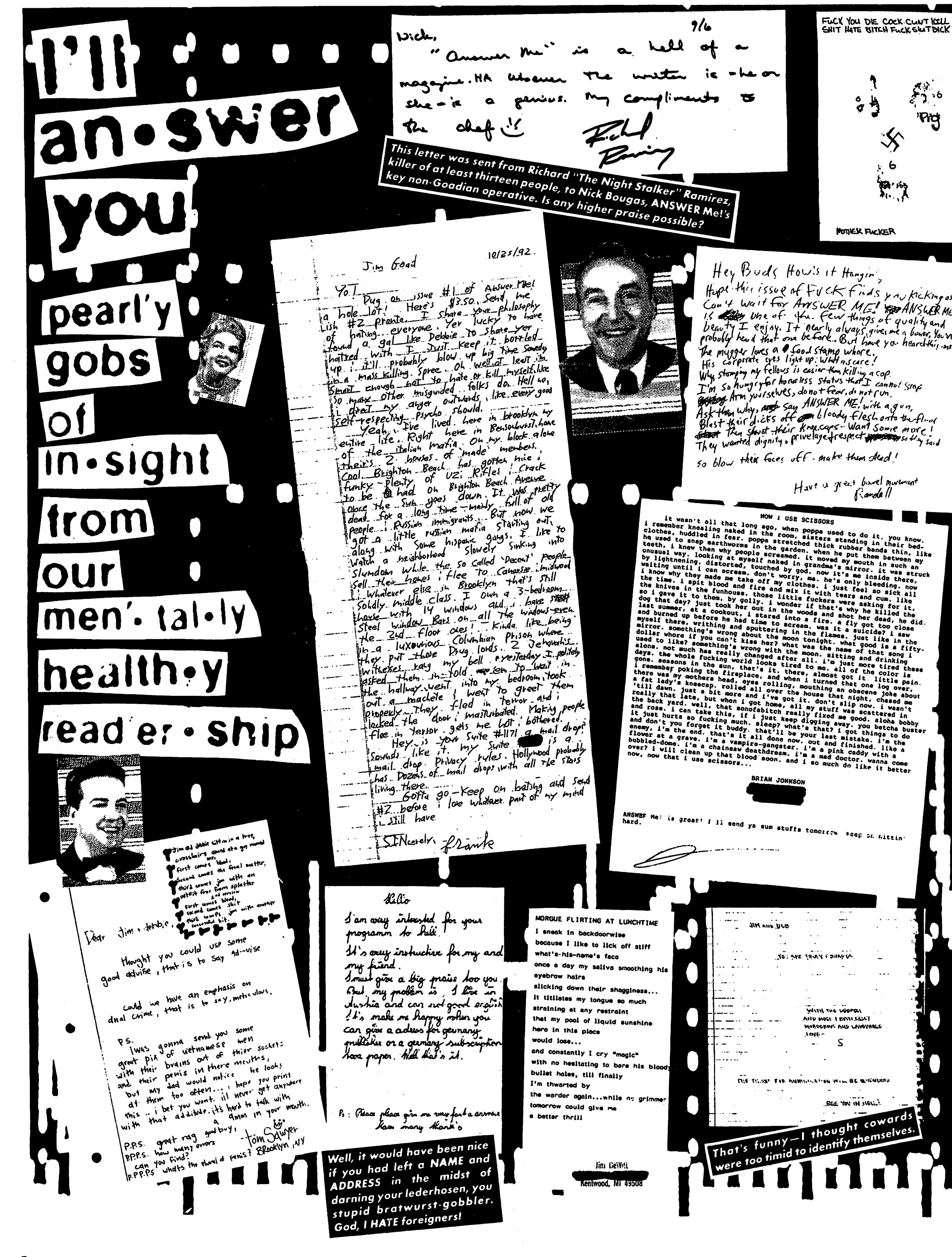


Dedicated to S.H. in Brooklyn, M.H. in Los Angeles, and that lying, toothless earthworm from *B.I.D.* How was I to know that you'd all react with such desperate jealousy when I refused to let you blow me?

Thoughtless comments lead to drastic consequences.

I'll answer you

pearl'y gobs of in•sight from our men'•tal•ly health•y read'er•ship



Nick,
"Answer Me" is a hell of a magazine. HA Whoever the writer is – he or she – is a genius. My compliments to the chef :-)
Richard Ramirez
9/6

This letter was sent from Richard "The Night Stalker" Ramirez, killer of at least thirteen people, to Nick Bougas, ANSWER Me!'s key non-Goadian operative. Is any higher praise possible?

FUCK YOU DIE COCK CUNT KILL
SHIT HATE BITCH FUCK SLUT DICK
Pig
MOTHER FUCKER

Jim Goad
10/25/92

Yo!
Dug on issue #1 of Answer Me!
a hole lot! Here's $3.50. Send me
Lish #2 pronto. I share your philosophy
of hating everyone. Yer lucky to have
found a gal like Debbie to share yer
hatred with. I just keep it bottled
up. i'll probably blow up big time someday
in a mass killing spree. Oh well at least i'm
smart enough not to hate or kill myself like
so many other misguided folks do. Hell no,
i direct my anger outwards, like every good
self-respecting psycho should.
Yeah. I've lived here in brooklyn my
entire life. Right here in Bensonhurst, home
of the italian mafia. On my block alone
their's 2 houses of 'made' members.
Cool. Brighton Beach has gotten nice &
funky. Plenty of UZi Rifles & Crack
to be had on Brighton Beach Avenue
once the sun goes down. It was pretty
dead for a long time – mainly full of old
people & Russian immigrants. But now we
got a little russian mafia starting out,
along with some hispanic gangs. I like to
watch a neighborhood slowely sinking into
slumdom while the so called 'Decent' people
sell their homes & flee to Canarsie, midwood
& whatever else in Brooklyn that's still
solidly middle class. I own a 3-bedroom
house with 14 windows and i have
steel window Bars on all the windows even
the 2nd floor ones! Kinda like being
in a luxourious Columbian Prison where
they put those Drug lords. 2 Jehovah's
witnesses rang my bell yesterday. I politely
asked them in & told 'em to wait in
the hallway. went into my bedroom, took
out a machete & went to greet them
properly. They fled in terror and i
locked the door & masturbated. Making people
flee in terror gets me hot & bothered.
Hey, is your Suite #1171 a mail drop?
Sounds like it. My Suite [redacted] is a
mail drop. Privacy rules. Hollywood probably
has Dozens of mail drops with all the stars
living there.
Gotta go – Keep on bashing and send
#2 before i lose whatever part of my mind
i still have.

SINcerely, frank

Hey Buds How's it Hangin,
Hope this issue of FUCK finds you kicking ass
Can't wait for ANSWER ME! ANSWER ME
is one of the few things of quality and
beauty I enjoy. It nearly always gives me a boner. You've
probably heard that one before.. But have ya heard this one
The mugger loves a food stamp whore.
His corporate eyes light up. What a scare!
Why stomping my fellows is easier than killing a cop.
I'm so hungry for homeless status that I cannot stop
Arm yourselves, do not fear, do not run.
Ask them why, say ANSWER ME! with a gun,
Blast their dicks off bloody flesh onto the floor
Then shoot their kneecaps – Want some more!
They wanted dignity, privelage & respect so they said
so blow their faces off – make them dead!

Have a great bowel movement
Randall

NOW I USE SCISSORS

it wasn't all that long ago, when poppa used to do it, you know. i remember knealing naked in the room, sisters standing in their bedclothes, huddled in fear. poppa stretched thick rubber bands thin, like he used to snap earthworms in the garden. when he put them between my teeth, i knew then why people screamed. it moved my mouth in such an unusual way. looking at myself naked in grandma's mirror. it was struck by lightnening. distorted, touched by god. now it's me inside there, waiting until i can scream. don't worry, ma. he's only bleeding. now i know why they made me take off my clothes. i just feel so sick all the time. i spit blood and fire and mix it with tears and cum. like the knives in the funhouse. those little fuckers were asking for it, so i gave it to them, by golly. i wonder if that's why he killed the dog that day? just took her out in the woods and shot her dead, he did. last summer, at a cookout, i stared into a fire. a fly got too close and burned up before he had time to scream. was it a suicide? i saw myself there, writhing and sputtering in the flames. just like in the mirror. something's wrong about the moon tonight. what good is a fifty-dollar whore if you can't kiss her? what was the name of that song i used to like? something's wrong with the moon. sitting and drinking alone. not much has really changed after all. i'm just more tired these days. the whole fucking world looks tired to me. all of the color is gone. seasons in the sun, that's it. there, almost got it. little pain. i remember poking the fireplace, and when i turned that one log over, there was my mothers head, eyes rolling, mouthing an obscene joke about a fat lady's kneecap. rolled all over the house that night, chased me 'till dawn. just a bit more and i've got it. don't slip now. i wasn't really that late, but when i got home, all my stuff was scattered in the back yard. well, that sonofabitch really fixed me good. aloha bobby and rose. i can take this, if i just keep digging away. you betcha buster it just hurts so fucking much. sleep? what's that? i got things to do and don't you forget it buddy. that'll be your last mistake. i'm the enemy, i'm the end. that's it all done now. out and finished. like a flower at a grave. i'm a vampire-gangster. i'm a pink caddy with a bubbled-dome. i'm a chainsaw deathdream. i'm a mad doctor. wanna come over? i will clean up that blood soon. and i so much do like it better now, now that i use scissors...

BRIAN JOHNSON
[redacted]

ANSWEF Me: is great! I'll send ya sum stuffs tomorrow. keep on hittin' hard.

Jim and debbie sittin in a tree,
crosshairs aimed at a guy named
me,
First comes blood,
Second comes the fecal matter,
third comes jim with an
outfit free from splatter
2nd version
First comes blood,
second comes shit
third comes jim with another
successful hit.

Dear Jim & debbie,

thought you could use some good advise, that is to say ad--vise

could we have an emphasis on dnal crime, that is to say, meticulous.

P.S.
I was gonna send you some great pix of vietnamese men with their brains out of thier sockets and their penis in there mouths, but my dad would notice he looks at them too often.... i hope you print this .. i bet you won't. ill never get anywhere with that additude. it's hard to talk with a 9mm in your mouth.

P.P.S. great rag good buy,
P.P.P.S. how many errors can you find?
P.P.P.P.S whats the plural of penis?
–Tom Sawyer
Brooklyn, NY

Hello

I am very interested for your programm to hell.
It's very instructive for my and my friend.
I must give a big praise too you.
But my problem is, I live in Austria and can not good english!
It's make me happy when you can give a adress for germany publisher or a germany subscription for paper. Well that's it.

Ps: Please please give me very fast a answer
Many many thank's

Well, it would have been nice if you had left a NAME and ADDRESS in the midst of darning your lederhosen, you stupid bratwurst-gobbler. God, I HATE foreigners!

MORGUE FLIRTING AT LUNCHTIME

I sneak in backdoorwise
because I like to lick off stiff
what's-his-name's face
once a day my saliva smoothing his
eyebrow hairs
slicking down their shagginess...
It titillates my tongue so much
straining at any restraint
that my pool of liquid sunshine
here in this place
would lose...
and constantly I cry "magic"
with no hesitating to bare his bloody
bullet holes, till finally
I'm thwarted by
the warder again...while no grimmer
tomorrow could give me
a better thrill

Jim DeWitt
[redacted]
Kentwood, MI 49508

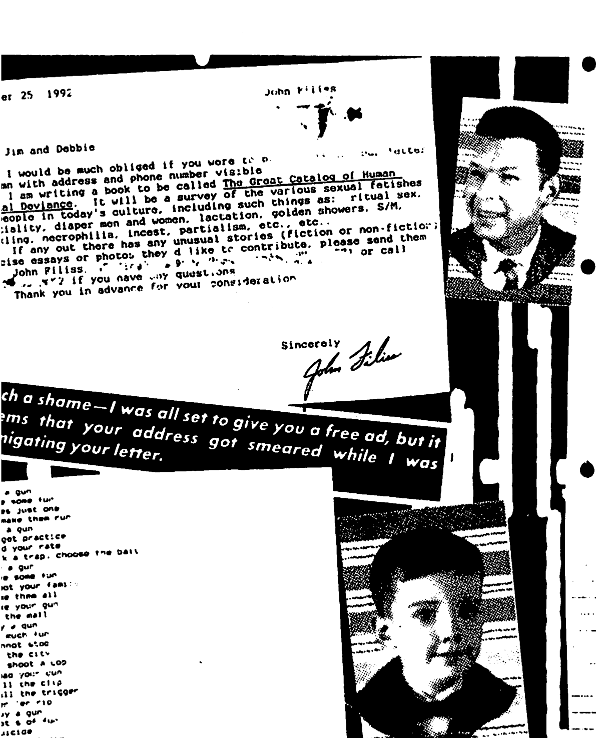
JIM AND DEB

WITH THE

S

SEE YOU IN HELL!

That's funny—I thought cowards were too timid to identify themselves.



er 25 1992

John Filiss

Jim and Debbie

I would be much obliged if you were to p...
mn with address and phone number visible
I am writing a book to be called The Great Catalog of Human
al Deviance. It will be a survey of the various sexual fetishes
people in today's culture, including such things as: ritual sex,
ciality, diaper men and women, lactation, golden showers, S/M,
cling, necrophilia, incest, partialism, etc., etc..
If any out there has any unusual stories (fiction or non-fiction)
cise essays or photos they d like to contribute, please send them
John Filiss. ... or call
... if you have any questions
Thank you in advance for your consideration

Sincerely
John Filiss

...ch a shame—I was all set to give you a free ad, but it seems that your address got smeared while I was ...nigating your letter.

a gun
some fun
just one
make them run
a gun
got practice
your rate
a trap, choose the bait
a gun
some fun
your family
them all
your gun
the mall
a gun
much fun
not stop
the city
shoot a cop
your gun
the clip
the trigger
...er rip
a gun
s of fun
suicide
your brain
easy way
end the pain
your gun
the cat
sixteen bullets
Spalt! Spalt! Spalt!
buy a gun
really fun
shoot your neighbor
in the face
bury him
in a secret place
sell your gun
make a plan
buy another
kill again

Hope you like it. You could even edit out everything but the opening and the poem if you like. Or not. You could just clip it out and hang it on your fridge. Read it to Anton Levey. Anything. Oh, buy the way, I don't usually condone the slaying of animals, defenseless or other wise.(except people)

I remain,
Ford

Mr. Gord to Hell
Please Send ISSUE #1
AND #3 If It come out yet
Your magazine makes me want to climb a tower and utilize all my military training I ascertained on the firing range

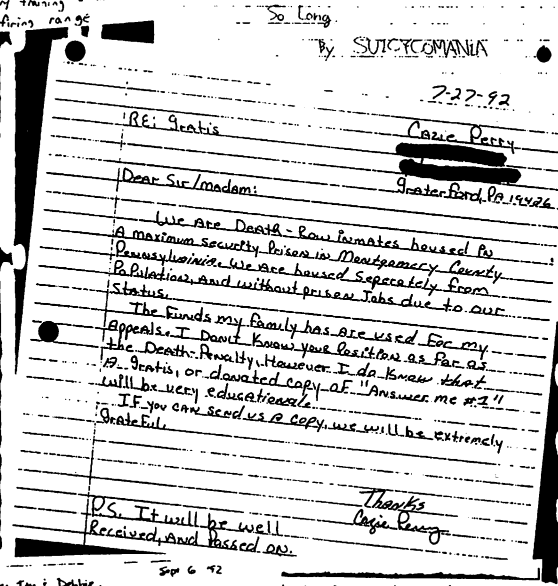
OH GOD! IT SEEMED I CAN REAL ONE IN YOUR SHIT #2 PAGE 94, ABOVE SCATOLOGICAL HAIKU. He is a fucken alien from outer shit space isn't he!! He is goddamn! Oh oh oh CUM CUM CUM It's groovy! So What the fuck is my existance!? I just wanna fucken know! but it seems never shit clear. I guess I've been crucified haven't fucker I?! Drown by misery. Oh Goddamn! If I do look funny, I also shit I feel like shit. I really sympathize mutha-fucken cycos, cuz I'm the man of Jizz, man! Even I need damn help, how the fuck can I be damn cured? I just feel like shit. Now, sealiously, some people (I think) got to never know what their purpose to live are. those people do somethin weird shit because they are just so damn alone I guess Me either I do not know where I'm going .... Insane? Only things I can do Jerk off and sleep. then I despair that I'm left no mean to survive but always like that but I'm still survive for what? People ever ask me to try make life better. I did but wasn't so easy, it's not easy as Regular people or do. I lost that! it

'WHEN WE'VE GOT NOWHERE TO RUN MADNESS IS OUR LOADED GUN'

Mourning but I can't make feel fine wiz so many grief. But people misfucken understand. I'm not that kind person man! People never known I hide... I just grin to bear shit. Like a crown. I do look funny but I hide to hate wiz everybody seems so damn fine. but I'm not gonna do kill people. I just feel misery I'm not a positive mutha fucka. I wish just people not to do put me down. Just leave me the fuck alone. Nobody can help as I know. but It's alright because nobody will get hurt as cyco-sereal killer do.... I just do read weird shit, listen weird shit, eat weird shit, speak weird shit for (painkiller). So Just I wish people to fuck out of my mutha-jumping face...

So Long.

By SUICYCOMANIA



7-27-92

RE: Gratis

Cazie Perry
[redacted]
Graterford, PA 19426

Dear Sir/madam:

We Are Death-Row inmates housed in A maximum security Prison in Montgomery County Pennsylvania. We Are housed Seperately from Population, And without prison Jobs due to our Status.

The Funds my family has are used For my Appeals. I Don't Know your Position as Far as the Death-Penalty, However I do Know that A Gratis, or donated copy of "Answer me #1" will be very educationale.

IF you can send us a copy, we will be extremely Grateful.

Thanks
Cazie Perry

P.S. It will be well Received, And Passed ON.

Dear Jim,

Thank you!! ANSWER Me! is one brilliant piece of literature. I read it in the bathroom when I am laying cable. I haven't found any typos, but Bushwick Bill IS NOT 4'6". He is Four Foot Two. Jim, you and your wife are Brilliant. The A-Z guide of Killers is SUPERB. Have you seen the Time Life book on Serial Killers?? It Fucking Sucks. It has got some good photos, though.

HOWDY JIM!

I talked to you on the phone a while back, and you told me that issue #1 is sold out. That Fuckin Sucks. If you have a copy that you can spare, I'll pay you $20 bucks for it. I'll even send you some illict DRugs, too (IF you ARE INTO THAT) (I'm A Reefer Addict). If you photo-copy the 1st issue, I'll buy that too. I'll EVEN GO ON A KILLING SPREE, and when I'M ON Geraldo, or A CURRENT AFFAIR, I'll tell 'em that JIM GOAD has been sending me telepathic messages commanding me to kill.

JIM, I have enclosed a couple of Stamps, and I would dig it if you wrote a really insulting letter to me. That would be groovy. Please NOTIFY ME when issue #3 is coming out. WELL JIM, I GOTTA TAKE A PISS, and DRINK SOME MORE BEER.

You are a genius
Thank you,
Mike Johns

SAY you love SATAN, JIM!

P.S. Where DID you score the groovy MURDER PHOTOS (not MUERTE!)

P.S.S. Nick is A TRUE ARTIST.

RICKY KASSO

Jim,

Good to HEAR from you. It's cool To Know You CAN DeTecT The "ANGER & FURY" in my VOICE. It's still there, Believe me. our 3rd Record, called, "EMPTY" will Be out By Halloween & I will Be sending you a copy. The Record cums with A Free Poster with Artwork By Kenneth Bianchi -- one of the Beloved "Hillside STRANGLER" KILLERS! AHHH, the Sweet smells of NON-success!! WE JUST GOT BACK FROM PERFORMING in KENOSHA WISCONSIN AND WHAT A FUCKING GAS IT WAS. Some DRUNKEN FUCKFACE WAS THROWING TABLES & CHAIRS At me AS I WAS HAVING CONVULSIONS on the STAGE & I wore my Scottish KILT So I could Show off my Beautiful LEGS & ASS. There was Broken GLASS & DEBRIS EVERYWHERE AND I FELT So AT HOME in This SELF-imposed HELL. We're Getting Ready FOR Some GIGS Here in This CONSERVATIVE Town of PEE-ORIA we'll Probably GET ARRESTED OR DESTROY the Redneck clubs WHILE COPULATING in A Pool of Piss. Did I tell You About our New Song About JEFFREY DAHMER? IT'S called, "CHEWING THE FAT." Lots of Romantic Little ditties Spewing Forth From my Forked Tongue these DAYS. I Really DUG "ANSWER ME" #2 & The EL DUCE ARTICLE GOT me off. WE ARE Doing A GIG with THE MENTORS on OCTOBER 19th in DETROIT MICHIGAN. MAYBE we'll STAB them to DEATH & STEAL the SHOW. Actually IT OUGHT To Be one Hell of AN EXPERIENCE of PAIN & DOWNRIGHT ABUSE. I'll Send A Video IF we GET ONE. By the way, You ARE invited To visit me if You Two ever GET out To The midwest!! MAYBE we can Go Visit John WAYNE GACY in PRISON IF ANYONE WANTS our New Record, Send $6.50 To ME. TAKE IT SLEEZY—Bloody mess

Bloody mess & The SKABS
Box 9021 PEORIA, IL 61612
(PHONE: (309)681-8852)

Jim,

Here's my check back. I guess I'll take two #3's, if it will cover it. Detroit Be is fucken Plastic!

GARY INDIANA is A weeping Sore. I have seen Studies that say it's the most polluted area in AMERICA even said worst air in the world. I believe it's been the per-capita MURDER capital at least 2 out of the last 10 years. I'm Originally from A town Just outside of the industrial Wasteland people from S. Indiana call "The Region". Every time I go back there's Another CRAZY guy does something. At Christmas it was A Crossbow Killer. Last year it was A Shotgun Killer who walked up to cars at Stoplights and Blam! The fun Thing is that All of them Serial Killers get copied. makes for great fun come indictment time.

There's A Taboo guy named Roy Boy who has a ... I hope mauled A young boy who Jumped the fence to see if he might be fun. He's kind of A Region hero.

If you go, I recommend the Skyway for viewing the mills. Summer should Provide some new Psychopaths to keep the news interesting. I could go on with Stories forever.

Debbie, by the packed

Later, Joe.

[redacted]
Indy, IN 46225

Sept 6 92

Dear Jim & Debbie,

Hello! First off I would just like to tell you how terrific your magazine is! I have never laughed so long, loud, and hard. And speaking of long, loud, and hard, I would also like to thank you for the spark your magazine has put back in my sex life. For months now sex with my boyfriend has been the same boring, 2-minute, missionary fuck night after night. Since reading your magazine, however, my darling has metamorphasized into one crazy, sexy devil! He recently ran out and purchased a riding crop. Now he forces me to crawl around on my hands and knees while he whips me like a pony screaming "Answer me! Answer Me!" at the top of his lungs. Apparently, he was also tremendously influenced by your El Duce interview because shortly after we read it together he pissed in my mouth while I was giving him a blow job. I love it! I love the new him!! The change is spectacular and has made all the difference in improving our relationship. Keep pumping out that great mag and I'll keep coming back for more! Thanks LOADS!!

Erica Hunter
Seattle WA.

Real cute, Erica. I couldn't help being struck by your smarminess. In fact, I'll bet you don't even have a real vagina.

...ats IR hell nuts me dude
...I can I say your mags mint ...ked in the brain ... ...io hey who ya callin ... ya big cheezer.

...ybe it's strange, but I never ...retted giving up PCP.

NEWS
"ANSWER ME" EDS VICTIMS OF SERIAL KILLER
NEWS
"ANSWER ME" EDS VICTIMS OF SERIAL KILLER

"IT'S WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE WANTED"

IS THERE A SUICIDE DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

A PRANK CALL TO JACK KEVORKIAN

Jack Kevorkian is the star of Bethlehem in a shimmering galaxy of self-imposed death. He's your ship's pilot on the shuttle to nowhere, a grim ferryman who has steered sixteen people beyond the pale. If you're terminally ill, there's only one way to go—just buckle your seat belt, close your eyes, and fly Air Kevorkian. The takeoff may be rocky, but the landing's always smooth.

Even that creepy Armenian name—*Kevorkian*—hints at knotted bones and jaundiced skin. Nature has bestowed upon the cadaverous Dr. K. a gaunt face and haunted eyes befitting the Grim Reaper. No death—either slow and ghastly or quick and brutal—could be more frightening than that emaciated mug staring down at you for all eternity.

But Kevorkian is nothing if not ferociously sincere when he states that euthanasia is the "last civil right," likening himself to such liberty-seekers as Nelson Mandela and Henry David Thoreau. He is no doubt a regular Joe—someone who likes cheese sandwiches, Sylvester the Cat, and an honest round of poker—but in his zealous railing against the medical industry and a government that criminalizes assisted suicide, he has assumed a near-mythic status. A hundred years from now, Kevorkian's legacy will be the stuff of legend. Whether he is viewed as Jesus Christ or Don Quixote will be for history to decide.

Seeking to muscle in on a piece of that history, *ANSWER Me!* thought that it would be fun to phone Dr. Death at his Michigan headquarters and try to negotiate our lovely assistant editor's suicide. In December, 1990, Debbie was diagnosed with an ovarian cyst. It has since dissolved, but we decided to give her suicide a trial run, anyway. At my prodding, she placed the call on the morning of February 19, 1993, a day after Kevorkian performed his fourteenth and fifteenth assisted suicides. With six corpses notched since February 4, the Kevorkian death train was going full-steam. Up until that time, he had successfully slalomed around Michigan's nebulous suicide laws. The statute he cites as taking effect on April 1 makes assisted suicide a felony in Michigan, punishable by up to four years' imprisonment. But Michigan officials, perhaps freaked by Kevorkian's feverish pace, moved the law up to take effect on February 26, only a week after our call. Jack has vowed to take his civil disobedience all the way to the jailhouse, where he has promised to starve himself to death. We hope he doesn't, because he benefits mankind more than his persecutors ever will. We look up to Jack Kevorkian. In our book, he's the coolest of the cool cats. We wish he was our father.

Is this Doctor Kevorkian?
Yes.

Hi. My name is Debbie Goad, and about three weeks ago I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer.
Uh-huh.

I have an inoperable tumor in my ovaries.
Where are you calling from?

I'm in Hollywood.
California?

Yeah. My mother passed away in 1980 of ovarian cancer and, you know, she died a really painful death. She went for chemotherapy. Umm, I had to clean up the vomit, it made her so sick. She died an agonizingly brutal death, and I've just been in so much pain. It hurts me like a monster.
You know, the difficulty is [that] there's no place to do it here. You can't do it. I can't help you in California, and here in Michigan we have to have a private home. It can't be done in a rented place.

Oh. Yesterday they said something on the news about a couple in California.
Yeah, but that was in a private home here.

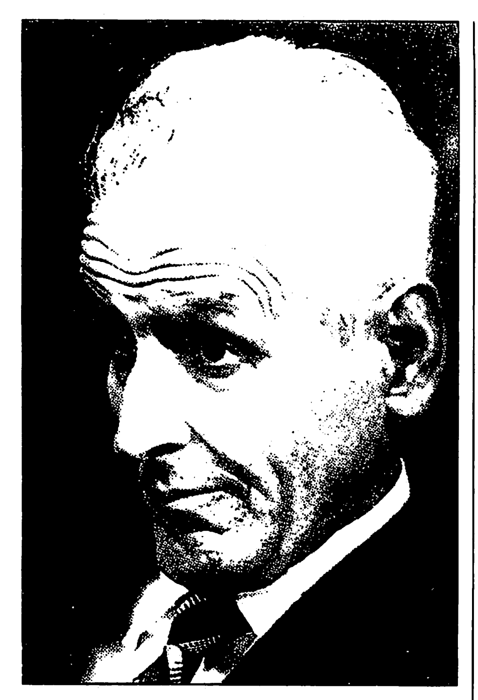
A private home. What do you mean?
They had access to a private home here in Michigan. You've got to have access to a private home. Do you have family, friends, or relatives in Michigan?

I'll come to see you.
I know.

I'll fly out.
But where's the house we're going to use?

I do have a girlfriend in Michigan.
Where? What city?


KEVORKIAN'S
CURE-ALL
COOP ©



There is someone in Detroit.

Well, make arrangements with that friend. Then maybe we can continue and see if we can help you. But we first have to have a place to do it here.

Well, I'll contact her later. I was just wondering—does it hurt? Is there a waiting list?

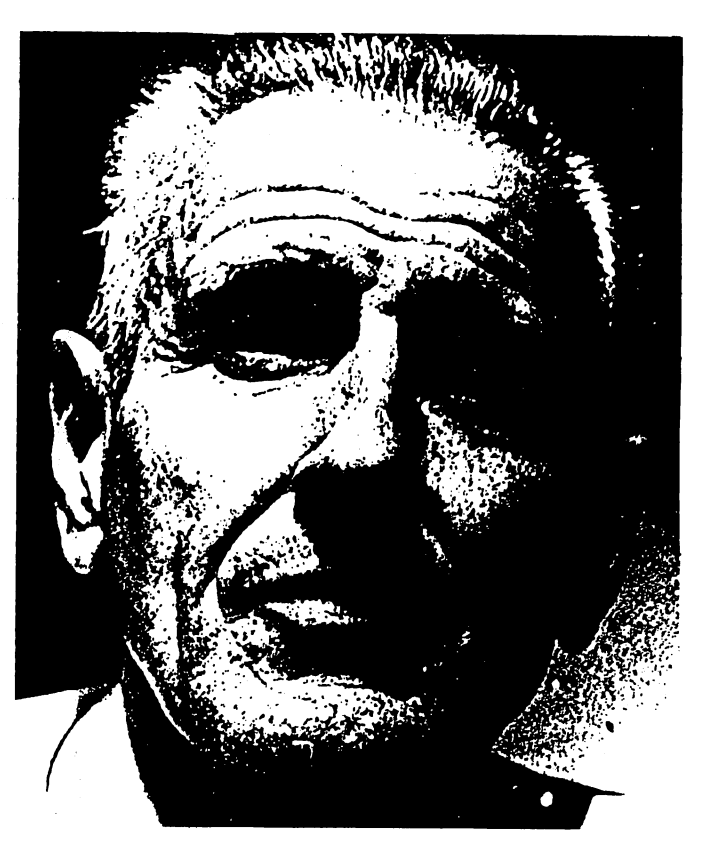
Well, I can't talk about details. I don't talk about details on the phone.

I have a shotgun right here, and I have ammunition. [Pumps our Mossberg twelve-gauge] Do you hear that?

We have to wait and see. See, the law in Michigan takes effect April first. We have until April first.

I know, but you look like such a gentle man on TV.

Until they move the law—if they move the law up like they're threatening to do, then we don't have time to help you. They'll move the law up to next week. If they don't, then we have time through April first, so if you don't hear about the law in Michigan being moved up to make it illegal, then check with your friend in Detroit to see if you can use the home.



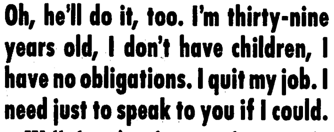
See, I have a shotgun right here. Do you hear this? [Pumps the Mossberg again]

I can't give advice on that.

And I don't want to use it because it's messy, and my husband, he's the only family I have.

What does he say about what you want to do?





Oh, he'll do it, too. I'm thirty-nine years old, I don't have children, I have no obligations. I quit my job. I need just to speak to you if I could.

Well, here's what you have to do first. You've got to put it in writing, what you want in a brief letter.

To you?

I'll give you an address.

Send it to you?

Yeah. Put it in writing what you want. What your problem is.

Uh-huh.

Then if you've got any medical records with you at all, I want to have a doctor's letter or a hospital discharge summary signed by a doctor to verify your medical condition.

Sure. You'll get that.

You send those in the mail to...[gives address].

I will. Umm, how much does the whole procedure cost?

There's no charge.

And how long does the whole process take?

Well, I won't discuss details until we're sure we might be able to help you. We're not even sure you have a place in Michigan.

Well, I'll contact my girlfriend. Under the circumstances—

—You have to get her permission. You've got to tell her what you want now, and she's got to say OK.

See, my tumor's the size of a kiwi, and I wish I could just reach in and pull it out.

I know what you mean. I know you've been suffering. I know you are. I know.

I've been drinking like a fish. I've been taking, you know, aspirins.

I understand that. Like I said, I can't help you unless there's a place here in Michigan you can use.

I think I'll be able to get it. I really want to meet up with you, doctor.

Then send me the things to the address I gave you. Send me your letter and the doctor's verification of your condition.

Once we get that, which I know I can get within a few days, [do] you think the whole thing will work?
We'll see. If they don't move the law up, yeah. Because we can't help you after April first.

I definitely qualify, though?
[Clears throat] If you've got the cancer you say you have.

Yes, oh, yes.
If you're near the end, yes.

Doctor, will you hold my hand? Will you be with me?
You've got to come with somebody. You can't come here alone. Your husband should come.

He will. Will you be watching while—
—Oh, yes. We'll be there all the time.

Is it normal to be scared?
Sure, sure. Don't worry about those things.

What happens to my body?
We'll discuss all that later. If your friend can't help you, there's no sense even talking about it.

I think she will.
Well, only then will we go on with further discussion. If your friend can help you and you send me the material, then we'll talk about it, OK?

I'm just so scared.
Well, don't be scared.

It's such a relief just to talk to you.
Well, don't be frightened. There's time. You've got plenty of time. Don't panic. [To] panic is the worst thing you can do. Don't panic. You got a lot of time. If you get your friend to help you, then get the letters to me in the mail, the copy of the doctor's report, and your letter, and then I'll get back to you after I discuss it with my colleagues here.

Well, what do you think I should do today? I can't sleep. I can't eat.
You've got to start doing these things if you want to go on, and I'm telling you if they don't move the law up, and they probably won't, we have until April first, and that's it.

What happens after April first?
It's illegal in Michigan. I go to jail.

Are you going to jail?
After April first, I will.

They're going to send you? You're such a sweet man! Sweet, gentle man.
If I did this after April first, I'd go to jail. So we have until April first.

But after April first, if you stop, are they gonna send you to jail?
No. If I do it *after* April first.

Are you gonna do it after April first?
Please, let's not discuss this further. Do what I said and get the material to me, OK?

I sure will. I'm just also concerned about you.
Forget me. Be concerned about yourself. Don't worry about me, OK?

OK. Thank you.
OK. Bye-bye. ■



the OVERWEIGHT agitator

AL SHARPTON threatens to sit on racism



Picture European males' alleged choke-hold on American justice as a rigid phalanx of white bowling pins and Reverend Al Sharpton as a big black ball seeking to flatten them. Now, I don't care if Al makes a strike, a spare, or lands in the gutter—I just enjoy watching him roll down that lane.

Whatever your stand on race relations, it's hard to deny that the lovable windbag is one of the most entertaining political figures in many a moon. The elephantine evangelist is Ronald McDonald as a racial agitator, James Brown if he had swallowed The Famous Flames. With his processed hair, tent-sized jogging suit, and general blowzy grandiloquence, Al's his own caricature. I'd hug him, but I don't think my arms are long enough.

His naysayers have called him a "race hustler," a "hate huckster," a "racial ambulance chaser," and "a piranha who feeds on human misery." They say he aggravates isolated racial incidents into widespread ethnic animosity. Al admits that he's a "social headache" who "challenges people's comfort levels." With a rhino's tenacity, he flings shit-storms of mud back at his enemies, freely spouting such epithets as "faggot," "cracker," "fascist," and "recycled white trash." He makes wild, unsubstantiated accusations about their sexuality or their evolutionary status relative to dogs. Few people can rub it in your face like Big Al. He really knows how to goad 'em.

In New York, Al leads the press corps around on a leash. Huffing and puffing, chanting and whooping, marching and picketing, fasting and screaming, he has elbowed his way into the limelight. In any case which bears the slightest whiff of racism, Al's there, sniffing a snoutful. He's been a key player in such racially charged affairs as the Howard Beach incident, where a black man was struck dead by a car as he fled from a group of bat-swinging whites; the Tawana Brawley matter, involving a teenaged black girl allegedly gang-raped and smeared with dog shit by white cops during a four-day hate marathon (a jury found the charges to be fraudulent); the Crown Heights incident, in which a black youth was accidentally killed by a Jewish driver, setting off days of rioting; the Central Park jogger case, concerning a pack of young black males on a "wilding" spree who raped and bludgeoned a white woman into a coma (Al sort of sided with the black kids on that one); and the slaying of Yusuf Hawkins, a black teenager who came to the Guido-thick Brooklyn neighborhood of Bensonhurst to buy a used car but was mistaken as a local girl's lover and shot to death. The last case received the most national exposure, due primarily to Al's high-profile protest marches through the hostile Italian 'hood. An irate Bensonhurstian went so far as to stab Al prior to one of the demonstrations, ensuring even bigger headlines. Al claimed that his life was saved by his protective layer of blubber.

He has also emerged smelling like a three-hundred-pound rose from governmental attempts to discredit him through alleged tax-dodging and mob ties. Al keeps the ball rolling, fighting the fight he began thirty-four years ago when he first ascended a pulpit at age four. He's so goddamned busy, it took two-and-a-half months and more than a hundred calls to his Brooklyn office to finally get through to him, and the phones kept ringing in the background as we spoke. Despite all his gassy bombast, Al Sharpton has his fans, and you can count me among them. When it comes to political figures, we need fewer zombies and more clowns.

What would you say is the biggest problem facing America, and how would you fix it?

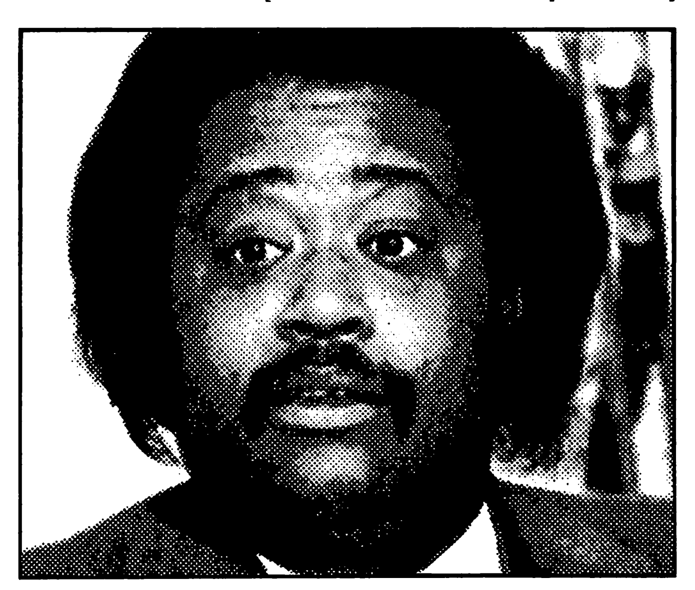
Well, I think the biggest problem is the distribution of wealth. I think the fact that the country is facing a huge deficit and [that] for the last twelve years, the presidents that have been in the White House—both Reagan and Bush—and the Congress have chosen to balance the budget off the backs of the poor and the urban areas, while they have given almost a license to steal to the wealthy, is the biggest problem facing the country. I would support the Rainbow Plan of investing pension funds into urban areas, as well as the plan of cutting the military budget by fifty percent and reinvesting in the country rather than the continual use of the sacred cow of the military, as well as the continuation of giving little or no tax to those major corporations, multinational corporations, and the wealthy. I think [that] until we can deal with the question of redistribution of wealth, we will not solve a lot of the problems in this country.

OK. Growing up in Brooklyn, what was your first taste of racism, and how did that affect you?

Well, the first taste I had of racism was when I was around three. I rode with my mother and father to Florida and saw the "FOR WHITES ONLY" signs in front of motels and in front of various eating places, and I could not believe that because we were black we could not eat or use certain public facilities. *[He could **read** at age three?]*

How are you able to attract so much attention?

Well, I think that any effective activist knows how to dramatize their causes, and I grew up in the movement, I was from thirteen years old [the] Youth Director of S.C.L.C. [Southern Christian Leadership Conference]



here, and the greatest dramatist of this century was Martin Luther King. And he did it by mass protest, he did it by civil disobedience. I also worked directly under Reverend [Jesse] Jackson, who was good at that. I was raised by James Brown, who certainly knew how to promote himself. So, to be in King's movement, under Jesse Jackson, [and] workin' with James Brown and not be able to know how to focus attention would have made me retarded.

How do you respond to people who say that you're a racist?

Well, I would say that they would have to give some evidence. The fact of the matter is that I have never fought against any race of people. I have fought *for* people that were victimized, including whites. And I think that there are those who try to label people because they don't want to deal with the issues. To fight for black kids being killed in Howard Beach or Bensonhurst, or fighting against police brutality, does not make one racist. I am not going out and saying [one should] kill any people—whites or Italians or Jews, anybody—I'm saying to stop killing people of color. And there's certainly nothing racist about that. The fact of the matter is, when I ran for the US Senate here last year, twenty-five percent of my votes came from other than black people. So I don't think a lot of people believe that. I think that is said by those that don't want to deal with the issues I raise.

OK, there was a *New York Times* survey where I think it was, like, one percent of white people had a positive impression of you.

Well, that was six years ago. I think if you read *The New York Times Magazine* last week, they admitted that I got, again, twenty-five percent of my votes came from whites. I mean, we could use old polls, or we could talk about what is the perception now.

Do you own a gun, and under what circumstances would you use it?

I do not own any type of weapon—gun, knife, or anything. I'm totally committed to the nonviolent movement.

Are you for gun control?

I'm *absolutely* for gun control. As one that was victimized by a knife, I certainly feel that we've got to be careful [about] what type of weapons are at large in society.

That's something interesting—you seemed really forgiving toward that guy who stabbed you in Bensonhurst.

Because I think that he is as much a victim of society as I am. I think that he, given the sociology of the community he lived in, given the media bent, felt that I was against him, [that] I was a threat to him, and not realizing that all I'm fighting for is the freedom to express myself and have no limits in society. So I felt that to penalize him without understanding that he had a mindset that society had put there—just like society had rendered unfairness to me—would have been hypocritical. That's why I stood and said what I said at his sentencing, because the criminal-justice system was just as guilty as he was, as far as I was concerned.



Besides [stabbing you], what were some of the more extreme things local residents did when you marched through the predominantly white areas of Bensonhurst and Canarsie?

Well, they threw watermelons at us, they threw urine at us. Probably the most memorable thing was, there was a wedding going on, and the bride and groom and the whole wedding party came out of their wedding to heckle and call us niggers in the middle of their wedding. I mean, I was absolutely astounded by that, and I think that what we did was what [Martin Luther] King did in the South, which is probably why we became very controversial here, is we were able to put on the evening news northern New York racism. Before that, there were people questioning whether we were exaggerating, whether we were hallucinating. After Bensonhurst, no one at least could question the fact that there was a racist element in New York. The question then was how to *deal* with it. So if nothing else, they have to give us credit for exposing the hidden racism in the North.



Do you think the climate in Bensonhurst has improved any in the time that's passed?

I think to a degree it has. I think that there has been efforts by people on both sides. Norman Siegel, who's the head of the New York [chapter of the American] Civil Liberties Union, and others [are trying to] bring harmony and bring racial relations together. But I think ultimately, the criminal-justice system is the one that's gonna have to make it clear that even if people don't learn to love each other that they're not gonna be permitted to abuse each other.

What sort of things make you happy?

I love reading. I love eating. [Laughs]

What kind of things do you like to eat?

Fried chicken. I'm a soul-food connoisseur. And I like reading.

What kind of things do you read?

Well, all nonfiction. I don't read a lot of fiction at all. But I like to spend my time in airplanes or in hotels when I'm on the road doing a lot of reading. I don't go to the movies a lot. I like the theater, but I don't really have a lot of time for it. But I would basically say reading and eating is my two habits.

What sort of things really get under your skin?

When people assume things without really carefully understanding what I'm trying to say. When you have to deal with stereotypes. And I'm not talkin' racial, but I'm talkin' about political stereotypes, rather than people trying to deal with the issues at hand. That bothers me. And I think any form of emotional disrespect, even among those that support me, I think that they should respect and hear what others have to say, because I think that it's the ultimate sign of ignorance to just jump into a situation and not regard the feelings of the people on the other side.

Alright. Here's a question everybody wants to know [the answer to]—how do you get your hair that way?

[Laughs] I go to a hair stylist once a week. James Brown's the first one that got me to do it, and I've had it like this for twelve years, and I told him I would keep it like that until he died, 'cause he and I are the only ones that still do this kind of styling. Or that I know of, anyway. ■



Thank Heaven for Little Boys

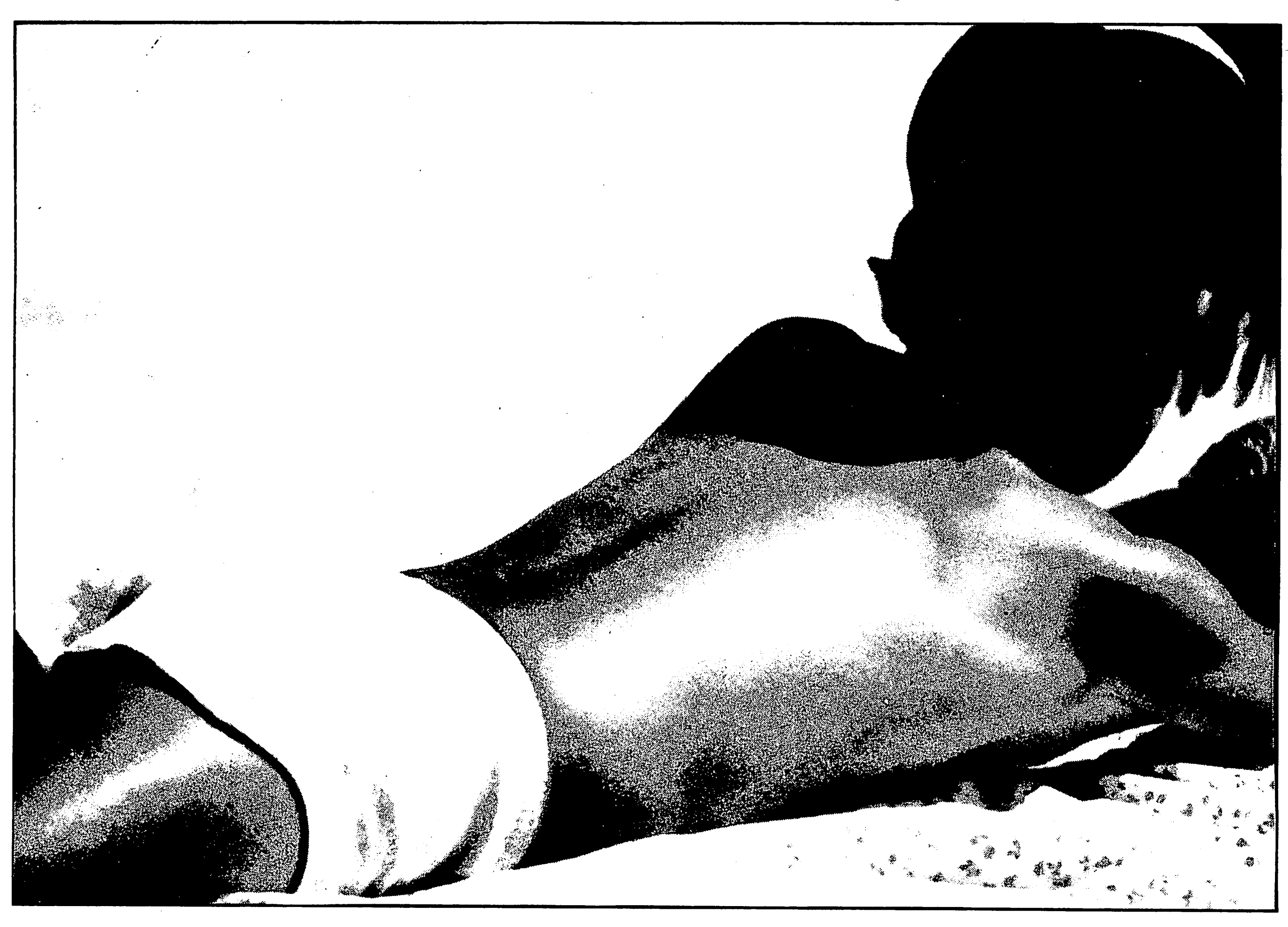
NAMBLA...North American Man/Boy Love Association or Nasty Asshole-Molestin' Before Legal Age?

Boy-fuckin'. Most "open" minds snap shut at the mere mention of it. The ultimate forbidden fruit, and a mite unripe at that. The love that *better* not speak its name, or it'll get its ass thrown in jail.

But for the North American Man/Boy Love Association, sexual-age taboos are as noxious as racial ones. They draw a line between coercion and consent, claiming that boys can choose to have loving, nurturing, butt-slamming relationships with men. NAMBLA is there to reassure the boys, to tutor them, to tongue their rectal canals. They're keen to share a smile, a laugh, a pair of balls across the nose. They love everything about boys: their imploring cocker-spaniel eyes, their slender ankles, their peachlike buttocks, and their pink little dicks.

The one thing—and let me stress that it's *one* thing—I admire about NAMBLA is that it has the testicular brass to organize and propagate its violently unpopular beliefs. The group was hatched in 1978 to counter an anti-pedophile "witch hunt" by Boston police. The FBI started bearing down on NAMBLA in 1982, but the group still thrives with the naiveté of an adolescent boner, counting a thousand or so proud boy-lovers in its ranks.

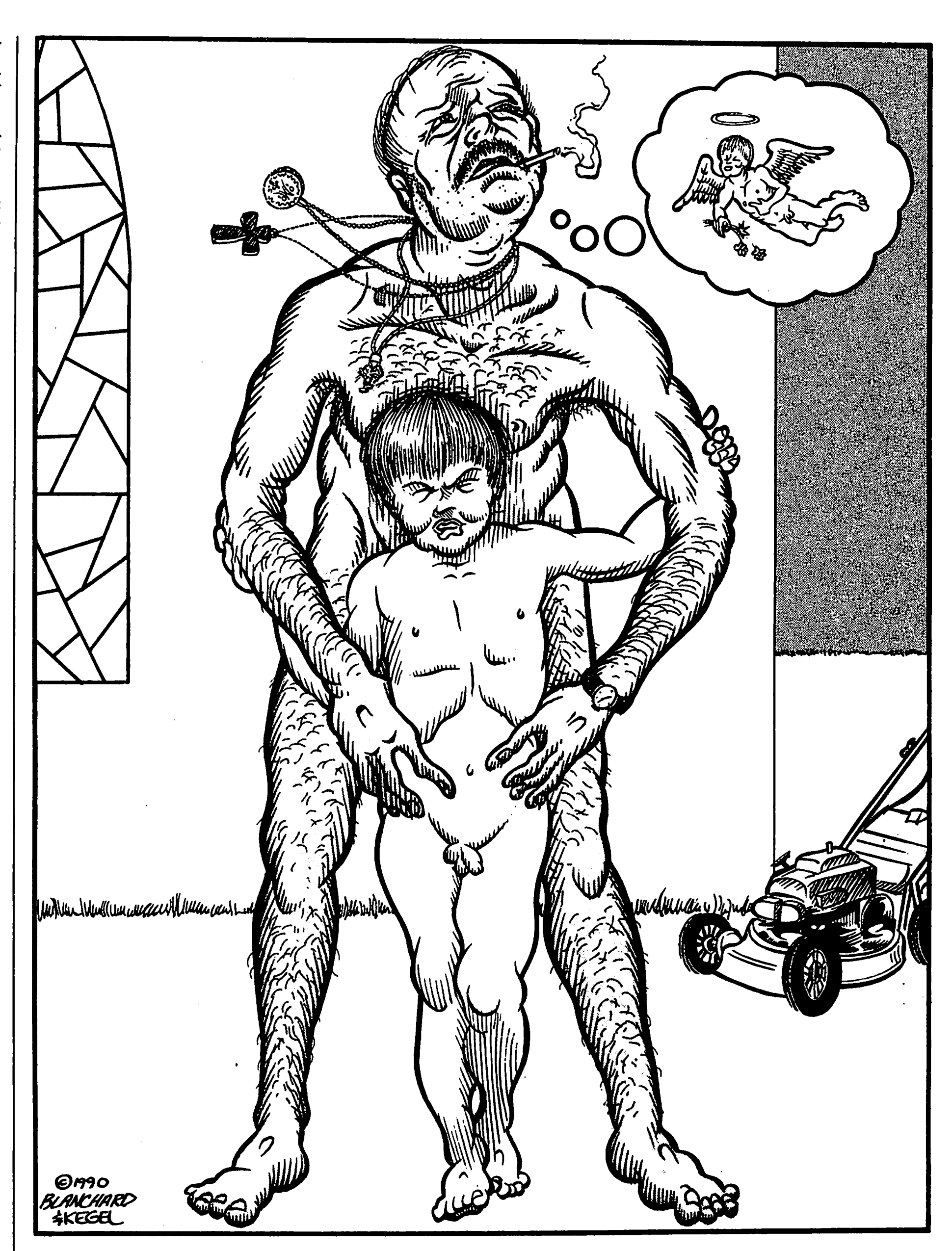
But they lose me when they assume the worn-out stance of the oppressed minority, cloaking their proclivities in a noble crusade for child liberation. They view themselves as victims of an "ageist" culture, squashed under the same capitalist thumb which stifles women and



blacks. I'd trust NAMBLA more if they dispensed with the theoretical gobbledygook and focused on their lust for boy-cock.

In their defense, they are adept at exposing hypocrisy about the mannish/boyish question. It *is* a touch ironic that twelve-year-olds can be tried for murder in some states while boys of seventeen are forbidden to pose for naked pictures. And there aren't many *women* behind bars for seducing underaged males, are there? Despite all the talk-show furor about lecherous pedophiles, the statistical majority of adult/child sex—not to mention most violent acts against children—takes place between depraved parents and their luckless offspring. "It is considered worse for a stranger to suck a boy's cock," reads one passage in the recent NAMBLA book *Varieties of Man/Boy Love,* "than it is for his parents to terrorize or beat the shit out of him—or even to kill him." Touché, but the offending parents don't usually have the temerity to form a friggin' *club* about it.

Wishing to get the story straight from the pederast's mouth, I called their New York office and chatted with Renato Corazza, one of six official NAMBLA spokespersons. Renato has an Italian accent as thick as an uncut salami hanging rudely in a butcher-shop window. He also uses some curious syntax and has a tendency not to use the plural form, linguistic quirks I preserved in the manuscript for purposes of "flavor." He didn't want to send a picture of himself, but I imagine him wearing a cream-colored leisure suit with a paisley ascot and having dark olive skin with wavy black hair (combed over to hide bald spots), a painfully thin moustache hovering above ashen, purplish lips, and thick glasses covering wary green eyes. What boy could resist him?



Describe NAMBLA's platform.

Platform. Well, we have several here. I don't think I can remember all of them right now, but we are for the empowerment of children. Our purpose is to educate the public on the benevolent nature of man/boy relationships and to act as a support group for other boy-lovers and boys. We support relationships—we don't initiate them, we don't favor them. I mean, we only support them in the sense that we don't initiate them and we don't—there's not a word that I can find right now, but we, when we find a relationship, we support it. We don't arrange for people to meet, in other words.

How would the legalization of pedophilia benefit society?

Oh, yes, in many ways. What comes to mind is the fact that teenaged boys, or a younger boy, even, that for some reason don't do very well in school because maybe the parents don't take interest in them, or they don't have any parents sometimes, but a relationship with a man, actually, has been proven that upgrades, very often upgraded their grades, make them [a] better student simply because of the fact that they have an adult that takes active interest in them and that is on their side and cheers for them. That's a very human idea, you know? And in that sense, it helps. And it helps to benefit society because it would really help to have—OK, you see, there's relationships that are, I must admit, there are some relationships that are deleterious. But some of them aren't, OK, and so there is a good side to pedophilia that is not appreciated by society yet.

OK. What's the most misunderstood thing about NAMBLA?

That we are lesser humans than other people. That we, mysteriously, we act upon very strange instinct. That we like all boys, which is not true. I mean, it's a personal question, a personal question of maybe biochemistry. It works in the same way that—in other words—yeah. The most misconception [sic] about us is that we are different from other. We are not different from other, we are good and bad, or bad, and [our] relationships between men and boys are along the same line that you have a relationship among or between homosexual or heterosexual relationship. There is no difference. There's certainly not the way in which they come to be are not different. *[I warned you about his syntax.]* I mean, more boy meets man, I mean, brings joy vice-versa, you know, in all kind of setting. Not only the sports arena, but all kind of setting. Oh, yeah—one thing that I have to remember myself is the fact that we are against paternalism. We are against relationships—we are not against relationships, but we make a

distinction. Relationships are based on an equalitarian [sic] setting, like man and boy meeting at a football game, or whatever. We view them in a different way than we view relationships that are based on some kind of a relationship of position of authority of the man. Like a priest and a student or a professor—a teacher—and a student, or a sport coach with his sports, you know, with a young boy that practice sports. In other words, we consider the sort of very guarded about relationships which are based on the fact that a man is in power.

Give some historical examples of man/boy love.

Well, yeah, I could go back, you know, this is not something that's new, I mean, it's been going on for millions of year. Umm, still now, in the Papua New Guinea, the social custom is for men to have relationships—at a certain time in their life, to have a relationship with boys in a separate setting away from women. And, historically speaking, well, I could [laughs], I can't remember all the occasions, but I mean, going down to the Roman emperors, when there was Antinos—I can't remember the name of the emperor, but Antinos, I think, was the boy that fell in love with the emperor. But anyway, all throughout history—Oscar Wilde—all throughout history, you find it. Marshall Montgomery of the British Army. All kind of—you know, there's an infinitive [sic] number of things that I've read that don't come right down to mind. Oh, yeah—Horatio Alger.

What was your first man/boy experience?

My first? My own personal first one?

Mm-hmm.

Uh, with another student in school, age sixteen, seventeen.

You were both that age?

Yeah. And then I realized that, umm—but anyway, let me see, OK, I'm sixty-two now, OK? And the first part of my life, I used to have sex with boys, often younger boys than me, you know, the age of twelve on to maybe seventeen, eighteen. Nineteen, maybe. And, umm, you know, I was a pedophile, I guess. And then at the age of twenty or twenty-one, twenty-two, I changed, maybe because of pressure of society or family interference, I changed, I decided to become gay, OK? I'm still a gay person—I'm very comfortable with it. I thought it was valid. I think it's a valid form of sexual expression and an emotional tie with somebody else. But then recently, I mean, ten years ago, I come running to NAMBLA. And my revelation was that after all those years, earlier years in which I had sex with boy, as an older boy, younger boy, it was a valid experience and it was something that I remembered with fondness. So now I consider myself both gay and a boy-lover. Both of them.

What can a boy give you that a man can't?

Nothing. That's why I put them on an equal pedestal. I mean, equally. There are some boy—there's boys that can give you a lot, and there's boys that cannot. So it is with men.

Then why the attraction or the focus on boys?

I don't know. I really don't know. I mean, again, it's [because] some boys are, you know, very fulfilling [to] your needs. Some boys are not so. But I could ask the same question, say, "What can a man give you that a woman cannot?" It would be the same game, so to speak. I'm not trying to—I may be trying to illustrate that there's no—it's individual, it cannot be collectivized.

Well, I guess personally, then, why the attraction for boys? What is it about boys?

Well, their mystery, their bodies, their mind, the way in which they do things. All the things that makes one boy different from another boy. You





know. And . . . you know.

Can you maybe expand on their "mystery?"

It's the same mystery that you have if you're an [sic] heterosexual and thinking of women. Knowing somebody. The attraction of two persons. I don't see how—you know, I don't see *how* between a man and a woman. Well, they say that there is an attraction—the attraction of the opposite, maybe. So it is the attraction of the boy between man will be, also. Not the attraction of the opposite, but the attraction of the different.

The *NAMBLA Bulletin* seemed surprisingly tame. What sort of things does the law prohibit you from showing or writing about?

No, no, no, no—we are threading [sic] very well this side of the law.

Exactly, then, what is the—I mean, what does the law prohibit you from showing or writing about?

Well, naked boys, for instance. Not that—it's a very complex situation, because we are dealing with fifty-four, fifty-two different states *[?!?]* and different laws. So, things that are permitted and thought reasonable in New York are not considered so in Mississippi. So we made very sure that we don't incur in any local position, local laws or state laws, you know, so that's why we are keep it—we know that it's a very tame publication, that's why we keep it so tame.

OK. What's the fiercest negative reaction you've ever received?

Oh, gosh, negative reaction—for homophobe group, I suppose. Umm, umm, there are different reaction. I mean, we have the reaction of the lesbians or not, well, the feminist rather than the lesbian. I'm sorry. Yeah, the reaction of the feminist, the feminists think that it's, uh—*some* feminists or lesbians—that, uh, that, uh, it's all of a masculine plot.

A masculine plot?

Plot, yes, to keep away, you know, to segregate away women from this type of, you know, being closer to man and a boy. Although I must say that some feminists are also on *our* side, and one of our spokesperson is a feminist, also, is a woman. Lesbians, they are divided: Some of them are for us, some of them—more for tolerance towards us—some of them are—it's all various things—some of them are, they mentally, you know, are hostile to us. Same thing with gay. I suppose if I have to point out the fiercest reaction that we could expect, that would be from skinheads, Nazi parties, and [the] Ku Klux Klan.

How would you define "perversion?"

I leave that to other people. Perversion. I don't know, I really don't know. Uh, why do you ask that question?

I'm sure you're aware that certain mainstream people would consider it [man/boy love] a perversion. I'd like to know personally if you think that any acts are perversions of nature.

I would prefer if you asked the question, "Is [it] unnatural or natural?"

OK. What would you define as natural and unnatural?

Natural is something that happens, something that has a statistical bearing, something that has been practiced throughout the ages, something that [is] very essentially harmless, and something that is in the gene, in the human gene. Uh, something that is in our brain for good. Another thing is that we consider this phenomena [sic]—well, this will be gay, actually, the gay observation that I'm making, but, umm, but you have to see all the phenomena in an [sic] historical way, you have to, uh, uh, uh—OK, there's people, like, they are boy-lovers and they are gay, also, and they've been around for millions of years, and it has a beginning and it has an end. Now, this is—*please* don't quote me [on this] as a spokesperson for NAMBLA—this is my own personal opinion—I say that we will see in the future, I'm talking about in terms of many, many, much time in the future, there will be a time in which, for instance, maybe—and I say, "maybe"—we have so much population increase that some kind of a natural form of birth control could be, you know, used. And the fact that gays don't have children, that would be a natural form of birth control, yeah. So I'm actually be [sic] dealing with something that are bigger than us, either than you or I. I mean, we are dealing in the twentieth century, but we don't know what happened, or how the physiology of this happened, say, five million years ago, when man came out of the cave. Or how we will be indeed, a few hundred thousand years in the future.

I just wanted to clarify—you would be saying that someone could be genetically predisposed to being a pedophile?

Uh, no, please don't say that, I really don't know. Genetical exposure to people to be a pedophile. [Sighs]

No—I had assumed that you had inferred that by what you were saying, that someone would





be born, say, a pedophile.

Some people are *born* pedophile? Hmm...

I'm just trying to clarify whether that's—

—I appreciate your question, it's an intelligent question. I never thought about it. It would be interesting to say, "Yes, it is genetic," because people usually do things under the spur of genetic, umm, you know, genetic making. You know, if you like something, it's because your *gene* tells you to like it. Well, with caution, I would say yes, that it may be a genetic trait.

OK. The media in general haven't been too kind to you. How would you say they've distorted what you've done?

Not all the media. Actually, among the powers, the powers in this country, the media has been the most fair to us, I must say. There was a point in history in which we were in danger of being submerged by a tide of hysteria, you know, people that really don't know. I must say that newspapers, for instance, like in the



New York Time [sic] and *Los Angeles Time* [sic, sic] have been very fair to us.

Is there currently a special boy in your life?

No. [Long pause]

OK. What forms of sexual activity repulse you personally?

None, except I don't like smells, for instance.

What sort of smells?

Smells. Body smells. That's a very small, small thing. I don't like that—sweat. Violence, anything which is based on violence. Uh, I don't know—can you suggest anything? I don't know. Yeah—sex with a woman. As if it wasn't apparent.

You realize that there's an element out there that would consider what NAMBLA does [as] sick. How would you respond to those sort of people?

Well, I respond that this country is in a repressive bend, and I would say that we don't consider ourselves that much different from the sadomasochists or the naturalists or any minority, sexual or not. Or the American Indian, actually. Because it boils down all to politics. It boils down to the politics that—by our policy and by our ideology, we undermine the paternalistic power structure of the family.

Have you ever had sex with a child while it was still in the womb?

With the child—if I have sex with the child—

—While it was still in the mother's womb?

When the child was still in the mother's womb. [Clears throat] I don't think that's a very serious question.

OK, then, how young is too young?

I beg your pardon?

How young is too young?

Too young? Well, I don't know. That's depend from cases to case. Depends from the case, depends from the circumstances, depend from what type of affection—you know, is it the sex, is it fondling, is it whatever it is? It depends from that. And I can't say. I wish I could. Number one—I want to assure [you] that we don't, we are not wearing raincoats and we are not assaulting two-years-old babies. Is that clear?

Yeah, I'll take your word for it.

Yeah. OK, aside from that, one of the things that they crucifies us for is the fact that we don't have an age of consent. And there are many



reason why we don't, OK? Number one, each individual grow, mature at different ages. So that—you know, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, twelve, whatever it is. You know, it varies, OK? We cannot pinpoint when age—twenty years, eh—beside, being the point that we don't value age of consent at all. We think it's senseless, useless, OK? If anything, it's an instrument of repression. What we value very much, *very* much, is consent itself. Not only consent, but consent in the capacity to understand what is involved. *Informed* consent, in other words, OK? If the boy, after being so, you know, advised, or so whatever—instructed, or whatever—if he continue to, decides to still, you know, carry on



with the same man, that's fine, OK? There are several other reasons that don't come to mind right now, but one of them is that we favor, instead of protection, we favor empowerment. In other words, the boy should be able—the *young* person, actually—although we stay away from girls and female, OK—but that, yeah, the boy should be empowered, should have certain rights, like the rights of serving in juries, the rights of inherent wealth, the right to due process. The right not to be beaten or to be mistreated. The right to vote, for instance. All kind of rights that should be extended to [the] young. And the extension of this rights [sic] will substitute the protections. There's no *need* [for] protection if the boys know what his right are. You know, he can scream, shout, and kick, but if he has the law on his side, he will be able to do so much more better. So that's one thing that we favor—we think that protection is in the hand of other, not in the hand of the boys himself, but in the hands of other people, you know, that sometime are, maybe sometime are good, have good intention, but some other time don't. Or some of the time they have good intention, but they turn out to be ruinous and destructive for the developmental person. ■



ISN'T THAT SPECIAL?

the kids of Widney High prepare to rule the planet

In the center of Los Angeles, amid the crack wars, five-dollar hookers, racial animosity, freeway snipers, psychotic drifters, Martian immigrants, and lung-shriveling air, there exists a special place.

It's a place of marshmallow bunnies, banana splits with butterscotch sauce, red-nosed reindeer, merry-go-rounds, cotton candy, spinning tops, strawberry bubble gum, and rubber duckies.

That place is Widney High, a school for developmentally disabled and severely handicapped youth. For there, music teacher Michael Monagan was smart enough to have an original idea, wise enough to share it with others, and brave enough to see it to fruition. His idea was to transform a music curriculum founded on rote instruction and dull repetition into a forum for boundless creativity. Instead of disinterested stabs at "Chopsticks" or "Hot Cross Buns," his class would write and perform their *own* tunes. He simply asked his pupils what was on their minds, and their answers became the germ for lyrics. They tapped out simple melodies on the piano, and songs were born.

Thirteen students—described as suffering from "epilepsy, cerebral palsy, blindness, Down's syndrome, and muscular dystrophy," as well as chronic behavioral problems—were involved in a recording project beginning in 1987. With Monagan's careful guidance, they became living proof that genius isn't found in the obvious places.

The result of their toils was *Special Music From Special Kids,* a full-length album released by Rounder Records in 1989. It comes out of nowhere and tickles your innards, restoring your faith in music's redemptive power. *S.M.F.S.K.* covers the emotional spectrum, from love to fear, joy to melancholy, loss to salvation, paranoia to unconditional trust. I've probably listened to it five hundred times.



Left to right: John, Gerardo, and Jerron condemn gang violence in "Facts About Life."



The LP kicks off with the mercantile exuberance of "New Car," featuring a smoother vocal than anything Lou Reed's done since the Velvets; it segues into the bittersweet fetishism of "Teddy Bear" and nakedly honest introspection of "Mirror, Mirror"; switches gears for a drive through the gritty streets of "Hollywood"; drops into the jungle during the phobic, Kafkaesque "Insects"; wins our hearts with "Mayra," a love letter purer than "Donna" or "Peggy Sue"; opens up the throttle for "Stand Up and Dance," a Jerry Lee Lewis knockoff without the substance abuse or religious delusions; sweeps into the breathless wonderment of "Throw Away the Trash"; paints "New York" in wistful, Gershwinesque pastels; and transcends the wheel of birth and death in the closer, "Ride Away." It's the mightiest musical achievement of the past ten years, if not the entire century.

Monagan shoves the mix along with Casio crispness, forging the distinctive Widney High sound: rubbery electronic bass, thwapping beats, and, in the glimmering keyboards, a hint of Jamaican dancehall. Sinuous guitar solos sting like Aqua-Velva on a brush burn. Monagan's sonic jambalaya touches on doo-wop, disco, rockabilly, reggae, and torch balladry. It's a super-sweet musical bonbon that tastes better with each bite.

Of course, it's the words and performances of The Kids themselves that make the album immortal instead of merely memorable. Each Kid is a disabled Amadeus. A multiracial coalition, The Kids display a collectivist ethos reminiscent of Up With People or the first few Crass LPs. But there are no cloudy metaphors here, no soulless obscurantism. You couldn't find pretension on this record with an electron microscope. Check out these lyrics:

Bugs are in the trees, and they're watching you. . . . You better watch out, or the insects will get you.



Minimalist poets could struggle a lifetime without achieving such clarity.

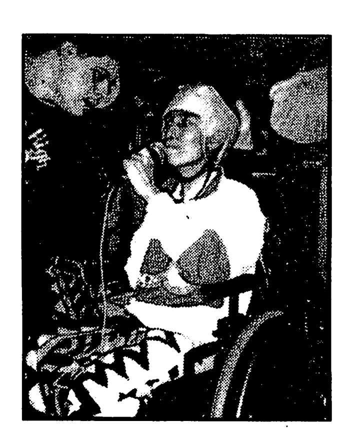
"The Kids—you know, they'll just say anything," boasts Monagan, a gentle man with Clark Kent good looks, "and so they'll really come up with sort of more wild ideas. Just out of left field. Which is neat, in an artistic sort of way."



Norman delivers an unusually sedate version of "Throw Away the Trash."

In concert, The Kids unleash the joyous yelp of a tent-show gospel rave-up. A recent performance blew the roof off of Hollywood's Mondo Video. As Monagan struck the opening notes of "Stand Up and Dance," The Kids' smiles burst open like an April sunrise. A euphoric crowd spilled out onto the sidewalk just to catch a glimpse of the rollicking, butt-wiggling hootenanny. Bobbing and weaving, slippin' and slidin', The Kids turned the blackest hearts into little puddles of melted butter. In addition to performing most of the album, they debuted four new tunes: "Facts About Life," Jerron Crook's martial anti-gang jeremiad; "We're Going Home," an evangelical barn-burner belted out by a new class member named Veronica; the soul-searching "Help Me to Find My Way," during which a few of The Kids donned blindfolds; and "Let's Get Busy," a hip-hop scorcher courtesy of Shelly, another new Kid whose buzz-saw larynx ripped through the speakers with megawatt ferocity. In an unexpected spoken segment during "Ride Away," diminutive diva Michelle Yamashita told how devastated she was when her mother died. She suddenly dropped her mike and staggered straight into my arms, sobbing rivulets onto my starched shirt. I felt inspired right down to the hair of my chinny-chin-chin.

"I like nice people, but I don't like bad people," Michelle later reveals in an exclusive phone interview. A recent Widney graduate, she's studying music at Los Angeles Community College and plans to become a blues singer. "What I didn't like about high school was leaving it," she says breathlessly.



Life-sized drawings of big people with tiny heads line one wall in Michael Monagan's classroom, the place where it all began. Disassembled chunks of old machinery lay scattered on a splintered workbench. Using a dozen-and-a-half Winchell's donuts as interview bait, I greet The Kids as they slowly file in for a round-table powwow.

Jerron rolls in on his wheelchair and recognizes *ANSWER Me!*'s editorial staff from the show. "It was fun," he reminisces. "We wish we could do it again." I proffer him a donut, which he gingerly plucks from the cardboard box.

"We had fun," chimes in Brenda, a blind girl with a mile-wide grin. "Yeah, the audience, too. They liked it.... I feel safe when everybody is helping me a lot with the songs.... When the record starts, then I can sing in front of you guys." She pauses to nibble on a chocolate cruller.

Carl "Downtown" Brown slides in on his walker and hovers intently over the donuts. He says his least favorite thing about school is getting up in the morning, and Brenda agrees. Carl eventually consumes not one, not two, but a *trio* of dough-based circular confections.

Shy sprite Veronica enters and sits, eyeing the donuts nervously. "A couple of years ago, when I was a little girl singing, I loved to sing a long, long time ago," she confesses. With a little coaxing, she joins in the festive sugar-chomping. Then, after the donuts and questions have run out, The Kids leave for recess.



"These are really the best years of their lives," Michael Monagan says of The Kids' sudden rise to rock 'n' roll celebrity. He recalls some recent live appearances, perhaps a portent of bigger things to come: a dance concert at another special-ed school; two spots on a cerebral-palsy telethon; and a raucous version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at an L.A. Clippers game. The Kids have also graced several local newscasts, as well as CBS's *Sunday Morning* with Charles Kuralt. A video has been shot for "New Car," showing The Kids as carwash attendants who magically transform a dumpy VW Beetle into a cherry-red, tail-finned Buick convertible. In the end, they all pile in for a ride down the Freeway of Success. Although some of the original Kids have graduated, new ones take their place each year in the manner of a Mongoloid Menudo, ensuring that the Widney legacy will endure for perhaps all of eternity.

The Kids of Widney High are becoming a multimedia juggernaut: A book and movie are in the works, to be followed by the ineluctable tsunami of global superstardom. Their ominous rise to world domination can be explained in one word: superiority. ■



Michelle bursts into tears during "Ride Away." John seems oddly unsympathetic.

RICE AIN'T NICE

Is Boyd Rice Culturally Sensitive? Does Your Mother Suck Cock in Bus Stations?

It's a name that sounds as American as breakfast flakes. It evokes tableaus of young Protestant men in shiny Easter suits. I'm reminded of apple-bobbing contests, moonlit hayrides, and pink slices of ham wedged in mayo-slathered Wonder Bread. I see swizzle sticks swirling iced tea in tall, thin glasses as a family sits beneath patio lamps, admiring a prom gown. It's a perfect name for a next-door neighbor in a fifties sitcom—Ward Cleaver, meet Boyd Rice.

The man fits the name—white-bread features, an easy laugh, and liberal use of terms such as "okey-doke." He's fond of cats. He likes girl groups. Disneyland's his favorite place. Such a nice *goy*. "I'm one of the nicest men you'll probably ever meet," he told radio witch hunter Bob Larson.

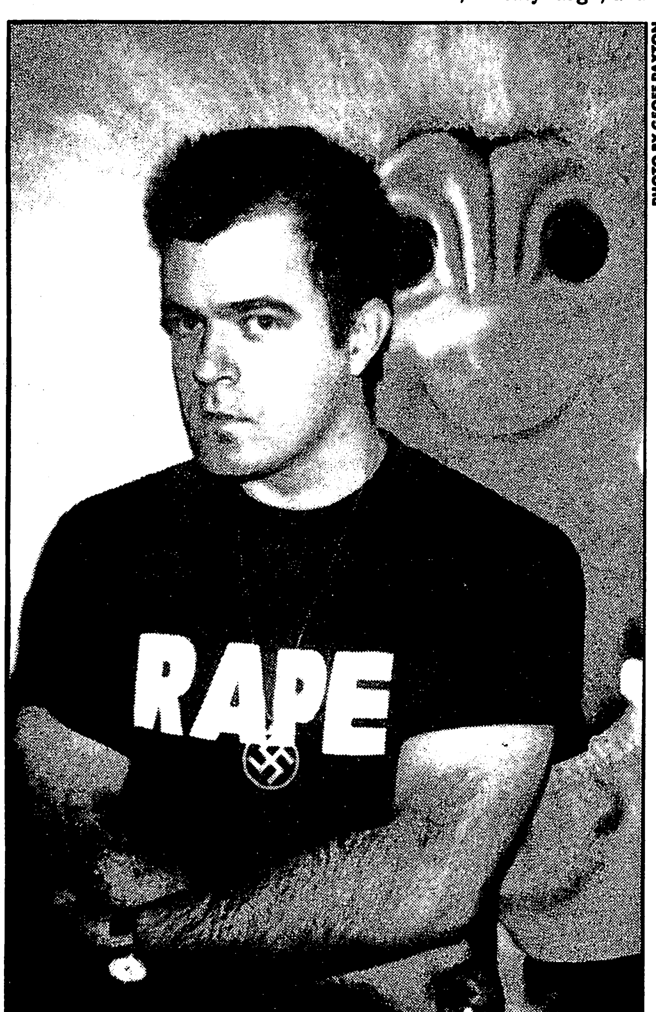


PHOTO BY GEOFF PAXTON

Rap-music fan Boyd grudgingly endures a T-shirt designer's embarrassing typo.

Aye, but Boyd's a hard one to figure, a tough nut to crack, a difficult Rice to fry. Larson, for one, wasn't swayed by his protestations of niceness: "This is *sick*, man!" he shrieked. "You're really scary.... You *are* Satan."

So who *is* Boyd Rice, the world-renowned musician, publisher, philosopher, and recreational bowler? Well, as the migraine-inducing musical unit Non, he porked the bloody womb that hatched modern industrial music. In later works such as *Music, Martinis, and Misanthropy,* his calm vocals floated over wintry dirges, muttering eschatological Rod McKuenisms about AK-47s and society's need for a "brutal gardener." That steady, unaccented voice has also spoken in favor of war, murder, AIDS, and starvation—anything which prunes earth's bulbous masses. "All that humankind thinks is great and mighty," he wrote in *Apocalypse Culture*, "is but a disease upon life and must be made to perish if life is to continue."

It's that brutal-gardener rap which pissed off the open-minded folk of San Francisco, a city which he abandoned for the pristine, glacial, Alpine—well, *Caucasian*—climes of Denver, Colorado. Under the big, blue skies, Boyd helms the Abraxas Foundation, which he describes as a "social Darwinist think tank." The Foundation's publishing arm is a virulent tabloid called *WAKE*. With articles such as "Long Live Death!" and "Nature's Eternal Fascism," *WAKE* peddles the astringent tenets of Friedrich Nietzsche, Gustave Le Bon, and the ever-cuddly Ragnar Redbeard. It exalts the blood mysticism and warrior spirit which characterized pre-Christian Europe.

According to Boyd, the gnostic deity Abraxas represents the confluence of good and evil, creation and destruction, positive and negative, *der yin und das yang*. From all appearances, Abraxas has incarnated itself in the icily enigmatic Mr. Rice, who's a deft fusion of mild manners and ill will. He's Goofus and Gallant as Siamese twins; the student-council president who's secretly slaying all the cheerleaders; nearly presidential, albeit in the antichrist mode.

But 'fascist' is a word as ghastly to the left as 'communist' used to be for the right. It's a blanket condemnation which freezes out any hope for constructive discourse. A prominent countercultural journal known for its strident politicking went so far as to slander Herr Rice with the 'N' word. Say it ain't so, Boyd. Still the bleeding hearts. Renounce the jackboots and brownshirts. Come back home.

Troubled that someone who seems as wholesome as a steaming mug of

cocoa could swallow such universally reviled concepts, we decided to administer him a cultural-sensitivity quiz, a word-association test designed to gauge whether Boyd's within the fold of proper political thought. We fed him *nice* words, *sweet* words—the verbal equivalent of inkblot butterflies—and he spat back a wasp's nest. Perhaps he is, as his detractors fear, a Rocky Mountain Mussolini.

HUMANITY: "Nature's weakest species of animal, yet one which wields the most force. A breed whose instincts have been displaced by intellect and whose intellect is totally devoid of intelligence. A *mass* of contradictions."

TRUTH: "A meaningless label that each person attaches to the variety of falsehood they find most attractive."

DEMOCRACY: "In theory: mob rule. In practice: economic totalitarianism. The dictatorship of the dollar."

LOVE: "Love is one of those words whose meaning is seen as absolute and universal, yet there are more varieties of love than there are different factions of Christianity. As most people define it, I'd say it's lust diluted with sentimentality. I have nothing against lust or sentimentality per se, but they aren't a particularly winning combination."

HARMONY: "Everyone seeks it, yet few (if any) find it, because they don't know what the word means. They seem to think it means peace or the absence of conflict, but nowhere in organic life will you find the absence of conflict. True harmony lies in the ability to both recognize this conflict and embrace it."

INDIVIDUALITY: "Unfortunately for the champions of individuality, man is for the most part a social animal. A lone individual couldn't manufacture a modern pencil, let alone anything requiring more specialized skills or knowledge. Nine out of ten humans are most comfortable in the herd, which is where they belong."

HAPPINESS: "What you have when you know what you want and how to get it."

FAMILY: "Like Keith, Laurie, Shirley, Danny, Chris, and Tracy—the Partridges."

JUSTICE: "The perfection that occurs when people are not protected from the byproduct of their own folly, when they aren't punished for their wisdom and rewarded for their stupidity."

PEACE: "A rare state which has only existed when a despot has been fearsome or strong enough to impose it. The image of your head on the end of a stick is a strong incentive toward 'visualizing world peace.'"

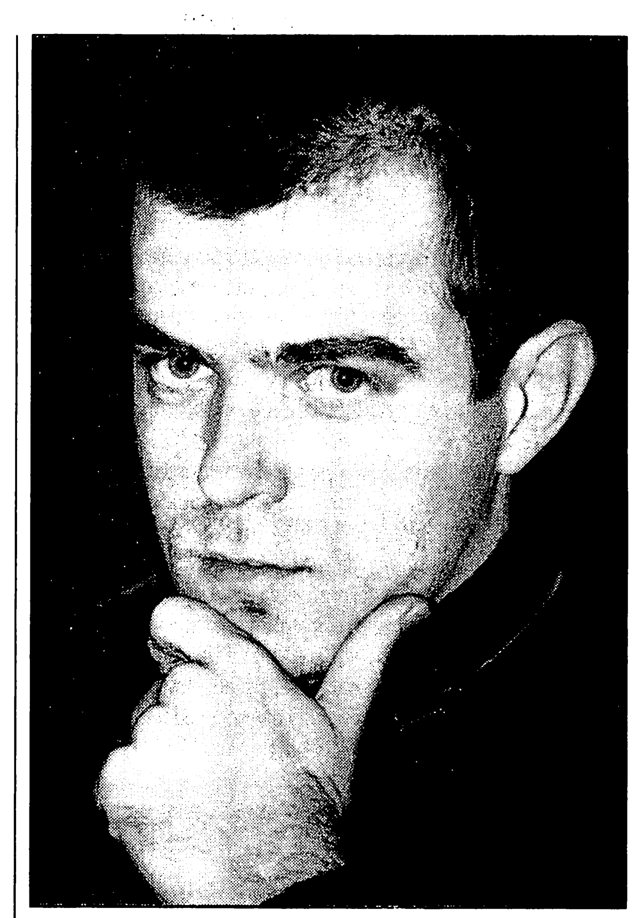
LIBERAL HUMANIST: "One who fanatically follows Christian ideals and dogma yet doesn't believe in Christ."

ANARCHIST: "A liberal humanist in a leather jacket."

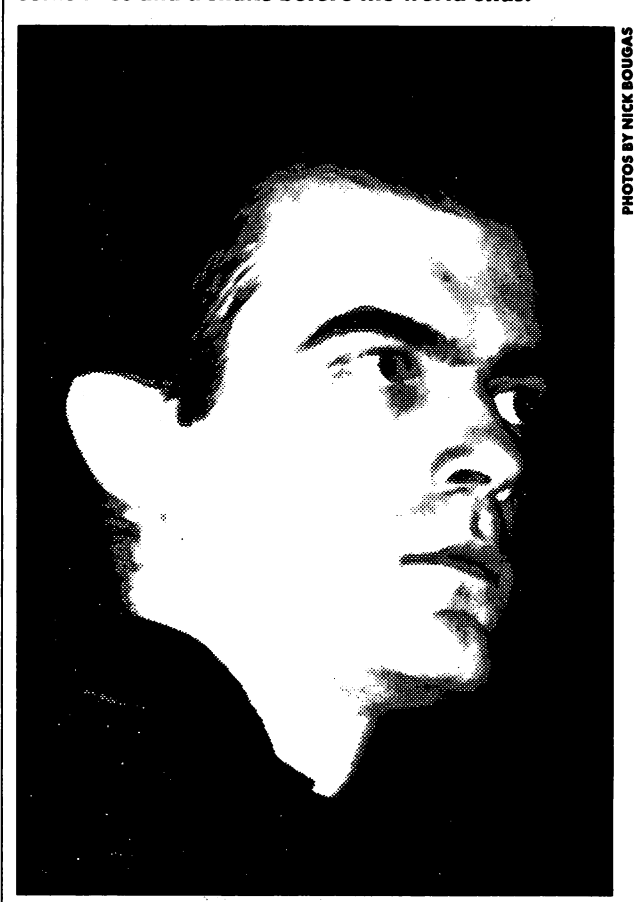
POLITICS: "Line from an old low-budget sci-fi movie: 'Politics is for people who can't run their own lives.'"

RIGHTS: "A figment of the fertile imagination of man. They have to be created by legislation and enforced by punitive 'laws,' since they exist purely outside the realm of reality. In the final analysis, you have only the rights you take or make—all else is simply wishful thinking."

EQUALITY: "I have no idea what is meant by this word, since I've never once seen any substantive example of it. Is a strong man equal to a weak man? An intelligent man equal to a congenital idiot? An ugly person equal to a beautiful one? If so, then what exactly is meant by 'equal?' If it makes other people happy to imagine that fifty pounds of lead is equal to fifty pounds of gold, then that's their choice. Personally, I just don't see it." ■



Boyd wonders whether he has enough time to get some fries and a shake before the world ends.



PHOTOS BY NICK BOUGAS

Madame Tussaud's short-lived Boyd Rice wax figurine.

She flits and flutters, she dips and spins, leaving a trail of stars behind her. Lovable and humble, she glides above a despicable world, soaring over the corruption, the vanity, the filth. She rights wrongs and fights for justice, a modern-day superhero. Just hip-hip-hip, and away she goes.

There's no need to fear—Suzanne Muldowney is here. It's a tragedy that she has never won an Oscar, that a postage stamp hasn't been dedicated to her, that residents of remote African villages don't recognize her face. It sort of figures, though. Jesus was considered foolish until he rose from the dead. No one believed Columbus when he said the world was round. And it's a woeful comment on humanity that people don't take Suzanne very seriously when she says that the cartoon character Underdog is an almost Christlike figure, a lone beacon of light in a dark, Satanic world.

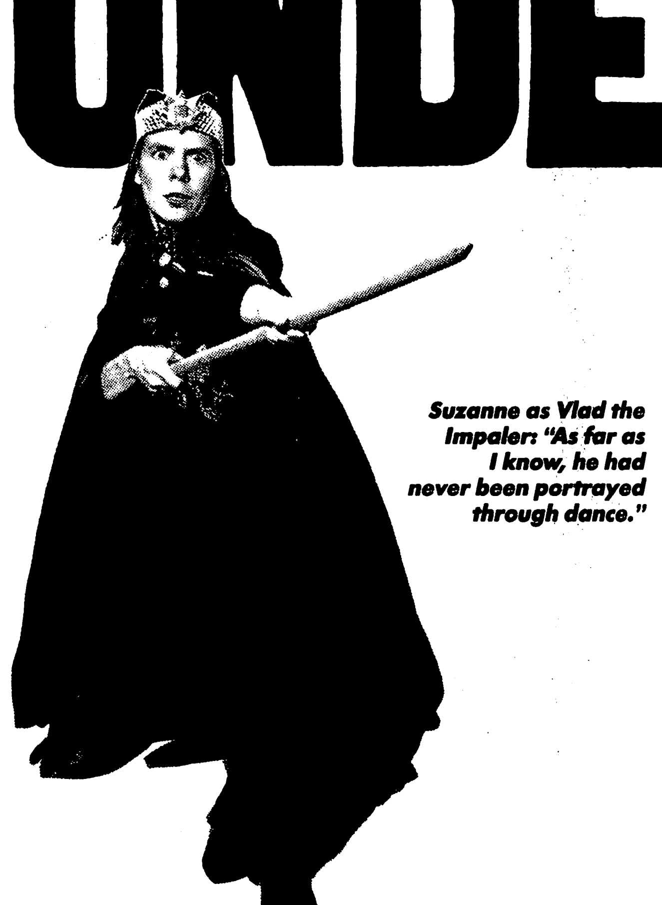
"Some malcontents have accused me of being preoccupied or obsessed only with Underdog," she laments in a voice that always sounds on the verge of tears, "and they think I'm too unholy a person to be a good example around them or their kids." Still, Suzanne presses on, performing her unique interpretive-dance tribute to the maligned cartoon canine at parades, sci-fi conventions, carnivals, and block parties nationwide. Although she's "suffered many insults and impediments" along the way, she knows that her precious talent will one day be acknowledged and she'll be "officially commended for [her] efforts" and "invited in for celebrities-only/VIP-only events."



Suzanne as Underdog: "No superheroes are ever depicted as making their toilet."

ALWAYS THE UNDERDOG

SUZANNE MULDOWNEY RISES ABOVE THE SCUM



Suzanne as Vlad the Impaler: "As far as I know, he had never been portrayed through dance."

The word 'underdog' signifies a born loser, someone who plods through life at a severe disadvantage. A pathetic turd, if you will. Suzanne can relate. "Until the cartoon series originated, I'd never heard the word. I was shocked when I was force-fed the real meaning. Some name for a superhero! However, it's true I've been derided, betrayed, exploited, even battered, all my life. The worst was when people pledged fidelity and turned against me after a while." The hurt, the shame, the rejection have made her feel like a "living underdog."

She fancies herself "a living embodiment" of the animated shoeshine-boy-turned-flying-pooch, a dutiful standard-bearer of the unsullied values the magical mutt espouses. Although she meticulously designed her own Underdog costume, a gleaming red-and-blue raiment replete with a silver 'U' across the chest and stars on her cape to represent the pup in flight, she wears no facial disguises. "My own hairline looks enough like his hound ears without a headdress or mask," she helpfully explains.

Her interest in airborne demigods was first aroused while watching the *Superman* TV series in the fifties. "Now, I was only five to six at that time, but... because he was supposed to fly, I tried to launch myself off the ground and couldn't understand why I couldn't stay aloft. Most of the time when I did try to make like I was him, I would be just sort of running around the room." Thus were the seeds of genius planted in her little girl's brain.

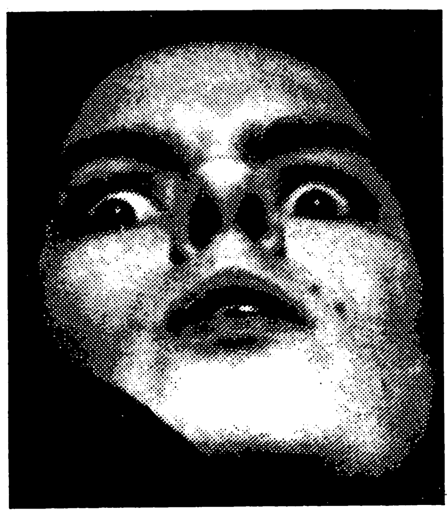
But it wasn't until the mid-sixties, when she sat transfixed before a television screen watching an astronomically large Underdog balloon float down Manhattan's streets in the Macy's Parade, that she realized her life's mission: She would bring Underdog to the ignorant, undeserving masses. She pursued her devotion with the single-mindedness of a saint in the desert. "Everybody I came in contact with got sick and tired of hearing me talk about it," she says. "I tried to keep my growing interest in Underdog a secret, but it didn't work in the long run. I was threatened with [having] my immediate family and my contacts knowing it all." Sadly, she says her folks don't "appreciate or support it at all, because they think I'm too imperfect."

Suzanne followed her vision despite familial adversity, deciding that she could best pay Underdog homage through *le danse.* She enrolled in a modern-dance class but found the experience too confining. "When I submitted my ideas to the group, they always turned them down," she complains. "You really lost your individuality, kind of like brainwashing in destructive cults." Just as a prophet is never honored in his country, creative pioneers are rarely appreciated by their peers. "I have never had any pledge of support from other performers," Suzanne says softly. "I'm always at it alone."

Admittedly, if her life were only UNDERDOG, UNDERDOG, UNDERDOG, it would be a little, well, *peculiar.* So she diversifies in order to quiet those who might suggest she's a bit odd. For Halloween, Suzanne metamorphoses into the self-created character Spectrum the Ghost King, an astral spirit who leads the other ghosts in a rowdy saturnalia. She also portrays Supergirl and is currently developing "a patriotic Cinderella for the obvious patriotic holidays." But perhaps her most compelling non-Underdogian portrayal is that of Vlad the Impaler, the fifteenth-century Transylvanian prince who skewered thousands of peasants on stakes and was the Dracula legend's prototype. "As far as I know, he had never been portrayed through dance," Suzanne says. "People had come to think that Dracula was strictly fictional, so that when I first realized the truth and began telling people, they thought I was *nuts!*"



We all have such enemies who belittle our dreams. But a superhero needs an *arch*enemy, and Suzanne has found it in the gutter-mouthed, sexist, racist, homophobic, so-called radio personality Howard Stern. The scatological pornographer of the airwaves invited her on his short-lived TV show, only to place her amid lesbians, homeless people, a drug addict, and a Klansman. Stern tormented her by asking if dogs could be homosexual and inquired whether she lifted one leg while urinating. **"NO!"** she bellowed. "No superheroes are ever depicted as making their toilet. That's one vice that is kept *pure.*" Though she bravely weathered Stern's fulsome comments, she feels a smattering of shame at being fooled by radio's Mr. Evil.



"I didn't know until it was too late that he was such a vulgar person," she says regretfully. "He's contaminated the minds of children—underaged children—by blighting not only my reputation, but also that of the Underdog character.... Boy, do they need a slap in the face! Not only Howard Stern and his associates themselves, but also many of their perverted disciples!"

Suzanne scoffs at such post-adolescent juveniles. She approaches life with tight-lipped solemnity and expects others to live up to her standards. An unbending perfectionist, she besieged us with repeated calls after the interview to ensure the article's fairness and accuracy. She even feels that the ineffable flying hound himself is subject to moments of unwarranted frivolity. "The original cartoon character was never made serious or sensible," she says dejectedly. "Why shouldn't I try to *rehabilitate* Underdog, because I had always wanted Underdog to be a more serious character, unlike the way he had always been made to be?" But as she toured the nation in 1989 to spread the word about Underdog's silver anniversary, she found little to console her—people were too busy having Batman logos shaved into their heads. "Nineteen ninety-four will be [Underdog's] thirtieth anniversary," she challenges, "but are people going to take better note of that and give me a better break than they gave me in '89?"



We can only cross our fingers and hold our breath until our cheeks explode. For now, Suzanne is sticking close to her apartment in south Jersey. She won't divulge her age, what sort of work she does, or which town she lives in, "because unscrupulous people might try to track it down." Envious bastards. Don't you realize you aren't fit to wash her tights in Woolite? She flies up, up, and away, with the rest of us chasing jealously after her. ■



nothing but enemies

I look out the window and I see them—I close my blinds. I turn on the TV and I see them—I pull the plug. The phone rings and I hear their voices—I hang up on them. The mail comes and I rip it up. But in my mind, I still see them.

So I turn on the computer. I'd rather glare at its icy screen than at their cardboard faces. Unfortunately, sounds seep into the room from outside—cars passing, people talking, children screeching, alarms going off. It's futile. There's no escape. They're swarming beyond my walls like cockroaches.



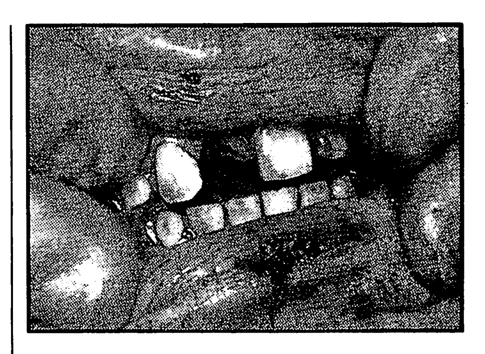
But I must go outside to get food. War zone. Mankind. No one's kind. Everyone's an enemy. No immunity. Nobody's a friend. I don't want to breathe their air. If they take a step toward me, they get a knee to the groin. Opponents eternally. Foes forever. It's pretty simple—I'm right, they're wrong. They can argue with me until their arteries explode. I know the truth.

They don't think like I think. They're blinded by happiness. They're too dull. They don't learn. They need support from others. I'm above their shallow chitchat. They talk and talk and talk and talk, but no words come out of their mouths. They brush up against my mind like steel bristles. They expel repellent scents. They're mobile sacks of lard. Pathetic pus puddles. Walking heaps of foul meat.

I instantly dislike them. I reject any advances they make in my direction. If they get near me, that old violent feeling squirts to the top of my head. I am not a part of this. We clash.

Lying, two-faced cocksuckers. I see through them like an X-ray. Their existence is a crime against me. They can't face themselves, so they play their stupid head games. They fail the test. Their plastic smiles mask hideous secrets. They puff themselves up like they're works of art. But behind the facade stands a pillar of shit.

I tremble, consumed with the nausea that human faces induce. The horrible specter of their hollow personalities awaits me. I shake with anticipation, knowing that I'll inevitably see someone. I shake, knowing that I'm smarter. I shake, knowing that they have nothing to offer except dead ends. I shake, knowing that my space



and freedom shrink when they're around me. I'd like to choke the life out of them.

Strange to see a chick who's so angry, isn't it? I've got on my battle fatigues. I'm also packing Mace, a stun gun, and my Ruger MK II. So don't expect a sweet hello. I won't ask how you're doing. I won't talk about the weather. I'm not interested.

Anyone who's moronic enough to bother me will get a quick education. Better stop staring if you know what's good for you, motherfucker. Did you hear what I said? You're fucking with the wrong person. Though I may look as sweet as a





cupcake, I'm filled with cyanide. Get out of my way, or I'll plow you down. Don't dare look at me. Don't talk to me. If you do, here comes a bullet.

Feel a chill? You'll get no warmth from me. No smiles here. I don't care whether it's cool or not. This isn't an act. If you think it is, I'll start popping caps and knock your ass flat on the ground.

Here comes someone. I feel my heart slamming against my ribs. My eyes flare red and bloody. Heat sears my body. No words are exchanged, but there's poisonous tension. The knot in my stomach pulls yet tighter. My teeth grind into dust. I'm ready to pounce. I'm just waiting for him to say the wrong thing. Try calling me stupid, a cunt, a whore, or a bitch. Yeah, I've been called a lot of names. But now try "executioner."

My hand slips into my pocket. My fingers curl around the stun gun. Eighty thousand volts will jar anyone who wants to play. I'll jolt my enemy until his skin bubbles and his head smacks the cement. I'll trample him. Oh, it would feel so good to finish the job, to stick the Ruger up his nose and start gunning! I'd hear him whimper like a baby. I'd see the blood trickling from his head like tomato juice. His lifeless hulk would just lay there. I'd kick his dumb face up and down, back and forth. If this stranger knew what I was thinking, he'd run across the street. He'd evaporate into the crowd. Good—he looks straight ahead as he passes. He knows better.

I'm stronger than all my enemies. If you lay one finger on me, I'll blow your head off your neck. No one fucks with me and gets away with it. If someone annoys me, their fate is sealed like a manila envelope. It only takes one time. They *will* suffer. It may be subtle at first, but their problems will spring up like blades of grass. Their lives will crumble. I'll get justice in the end. They'll crawl back to me with wet cheeks, pleading for me to stop. They're wasting their time. I hold the grudge for life. I savor my grudges. I decide when, where, and how my enemy's demise will be accomplished. Dead, dead, dead.

My list of enemies could fill a roll of toilet paper. Their tragedies are my successes. When one of them dies, I quickly find a new enemy.

I slam my door. Home again. Out with the bad air. Now I don't have to see anybody. No more problems for now. I walk into the foyer and stand between two full-length mirrors. I raise my gun under the light bulb, letting its black steel reflect back and forth into infinity. There are hundreds of me lined one after another, our movements perfectly synchronized as we wave our pistols. We were too nice today. We allowed the enemy to squeeze through unscratched. We cock our hammers and wait for tomorrow. ■



Tits. Cunt. Cock. Balls. Hard-on. Blow job. Pussy-eating. Ass-licking.

Do these words turn you on? Get you all worked up? Feeling horny? Hot 'n' bothered? In a lather? Do you get excited when I ask if you're getting excited?

I know you do, and it gives me the dry heaves. The mere hint of anything sexual makes your carrot stand on end. Your mind conjures sordid fantasies to suit your embarrassing needs. You seek satisfaction as quick as a hot lunch of Cup O' Noodles.

Your swollen bodily parts are paired with a shriveled brain. It's a stunted organ, a hardened cauliflower sprig. You don't like to use it, instead choosing to wave your dick around like a lasso. You can't handle theoretical concepts but have no trouble identifying a wet crease. Instead of ideas, your head is filled with stale sperm and vaginal slime. The blood seeps down, down, down from your brain to your loins.

Your sex organs are so blindingly ugly, they sting my eyeballs. Whenever I see pictures of another woman's labia, I shriek with horror. Any phallus other than my husband's is laughably misshapen.

You gullible lumps of shit believe that the stairway to heaven is paved with blown wads. Rancid protein and rotting fish guts are ambrosia to your nostrils. Your violent acts are somewhat entertaining, because I expect brutality from you idiots. But the fact that you ball is downright obscene. Get on your pimply backs. Spread those hairy legs. Get laid!

YOU TURN ME OFF

When first informed about the "birds and bees," my reaction was disbelief. I knew it had to be a lie. "People don't do that," I thought.

Sadly, they do. As you read this, untold millions are fucking, masturbating, buying porn rags, watching X-rated movies, dialing telephone-sex lines, lounging in topless bars, reading personals ads, and inserting dildos into themselves. You lust after your neighbor's wife, cheat on your spouses, get blow jobs in gas-station restrooms, and fuck until your nuts retract into your intestines. You view stag flicks, get aroused, and mount your partner's saggy body while staring at the chiseled on-screen torsos. You bastards just can't get enough.

Sexual innuendos are unavoidable. Overblown genitals pop out from every billboard. Forty-foot neon dicks disrupt traffic. A brown nipple spreads across the TV screen. A jolly radio choir chants some jingle about a strawberry-sized clitoris. Sex sells, jerkoffs! Preying upon your weakness, advertisers shoot for your crotch. They've sold you, stupid motherfuckers!

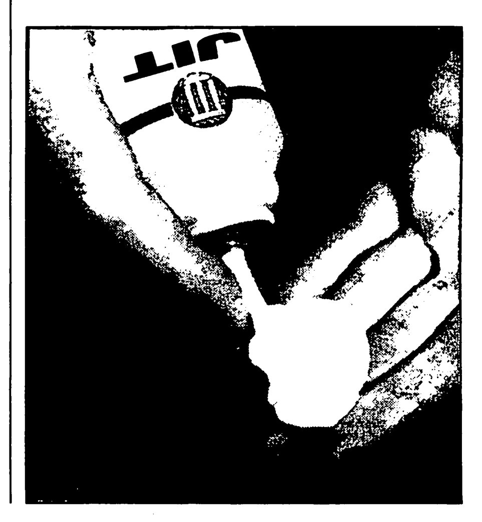
You waste your dough on edible underwear, glow-in-the-dark rubbers, sequined G-strings, crotchless panties, bondage gear, handcuffs, vibrators, and red light bulbs. You buy instruction manuals which describe the sorry-ass contortions of Hindu love rituals. You think striptease telegrams and genital-shaped dessert products are hilarious.

Find 'em, feel 'em, fuck 'em, forget 'em. Lick it, stick it, hit it, and quit it. Pluck it, suck it, fuck it, and chuck it. Eat it, treat it, bleed it, and beat it. You're a plunger and the world is your clogged toilet, right? Just the other day, I passed some bald guy blabbing loudly on an outdoor telephone. He said three words: "Shit. Shower. Suck." Code words? I think not. He's blatant about his scrotal imperatives, a shameless hornbag.

People who get enough nooky don't need to talk about it. You brag that you've had a thousand women. It's more like two chancrous whores and nine hundred ninety-eight solo jerkoff sessions. Any slit looks good to you. Your balls hang as low as your standards.

When you bring up your sex life, are you trying to shock me? You turn my stomach instead. You'll rap about your sexual partners, sexual stamina, and even your sexual dysfunctions. You'll recite bad sex jokes expecting to amuse me, to make my pussy lips cackle at your brilliance. You'll tell me how you fucked all night long, how some gash gave you the "bitchin'est blow job of your life," how she was a decent screw but you've had better. You'll tell me that you haven't had a good lay in months and how you'd love to watch two chicks doing it. You'll talk about cock-teasers that you've known and how a *ménage à trois* would be like a trip to Magic Mountain. You'll get nostalgic about your first wet dream, first circle jerk, and how you lost your virginity. "What horrible thing did I do to deserve this?" I think to myself. It's pathetic when you bullshit about your musty trysts. I don't need to know this about you. Nevertheless, your balls itch to tell me about it. Write a letter to *Penthouse*. Leave me the fuck out of it.

You bitches are even worse. Your ovaries shoot out eggs like machine-gun bullets. You wax your legs, paint your toenails, and smear cosmetics on yourselves with a sandblaster. As much as you doll yourselves up, the hairy mucus between your legs still resembles a car

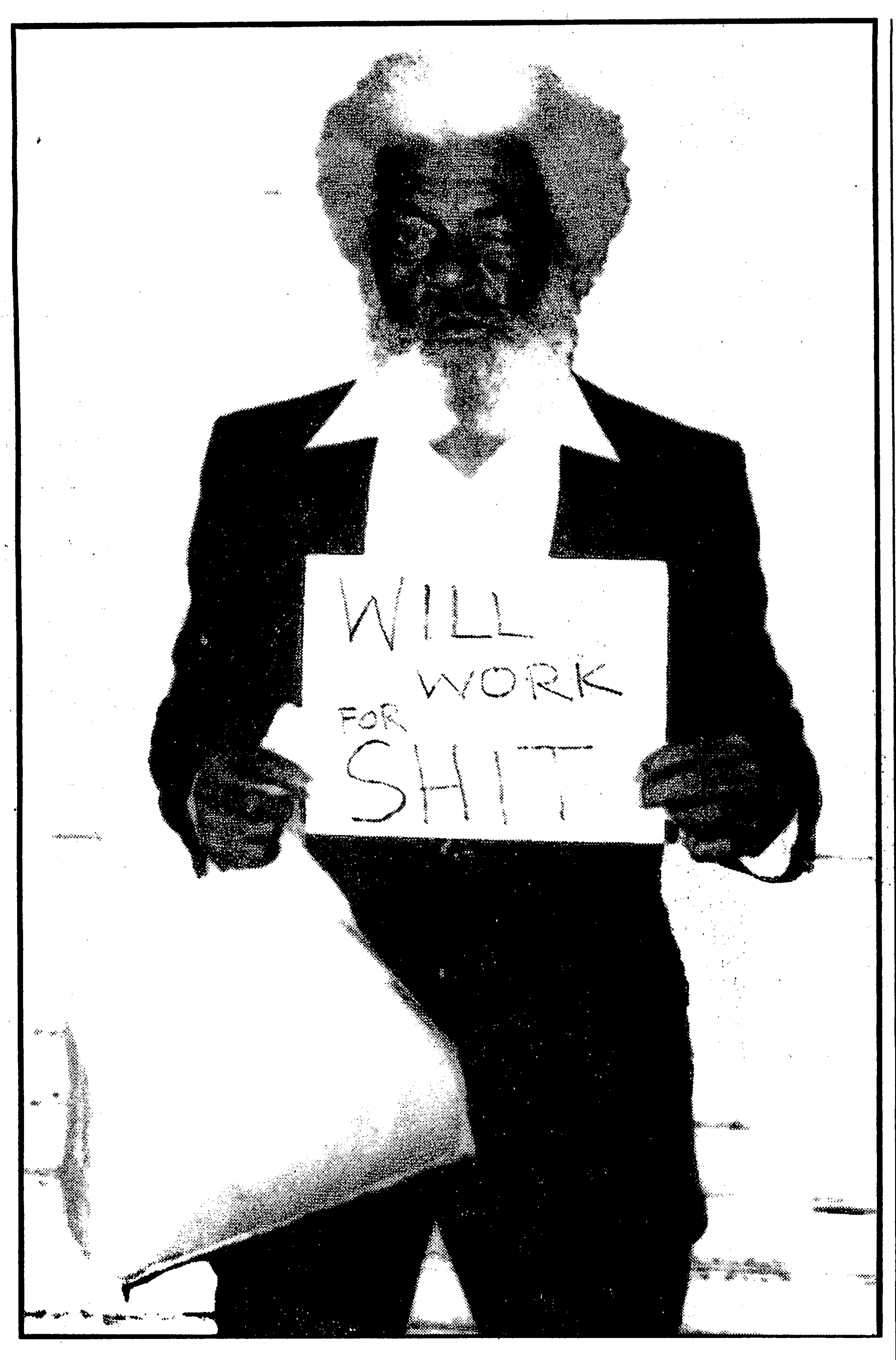


accident. An oil slick of female slop stains your panties. In your blind insect drive to reproduce, you plummet into canyons of degradation. You pray for your lover to abuse you, hoping he shits in your face and cums on your back. You tongue his balls with windshield-wiper precision and munch on his dingleberries like it's dried caviar. You hurriedly stuff his unit up your twat like it's a shoplifted item. You stick your pinkie up his rectum and twirl it as if mixing cake batter. He smacks your melons around with the backside of his hand before sliding his twig between those boobies and spurting his Alfredo sauce on your teeth. You gladly lap up your partner's genetic sewage like a stray cat sipping sour milk. As he dismounts and heads for the refrigerator, you scratch the stubble under your armpit and feel loved.

You're *all* animals. You mate in elevators, cemeteries, bars, phone booths, dump trucks, buses, taxis, and delicatessens. There's a couple making out right in front of me. Their ugly skin commingles. Their anatomies pollute my world. I'm allergic to them. Now, if they were fighting, that would be fun to watch. But *this!* Their shaggy, foul-smelling bodies are worthless. These mass-produced carpet fleas are too wracked with lust to put a rein on their galloping hormones. Like chronic nose-pickers, their brazen public display is sickening. They're cramming their tongues down each other's throats and pawing at each other's asses. Get the fuck out of here! Go home and enact your little passion play in your bedroom. I'd like to cut through their skin and watch them bleed. Better yet, I want to frustrate them by hacking off their reddened genitals right before they cum.

Still they limp along, thinking that having sex is some sort of radical statement. How subversive! It isn't like every animal on earth indulges, is it? Mosquitoes don't do it, do they? It's appallingly, routinely natural. It's an excretion of bodily wastes. Sex is no better or worse than taking a shit or eating a slice of cabbage. The act itself is redundant. You know what's going to happen and how it's going to end. It's merely a release of physical tension, a stress-reducer. It helps you go to sleep faster and snore louder. You cum, sigh, and then roll over like a beached jellyfish. But you act like getting ass is some kind of mystical act. Sex is merely the continuance of the species, so I'm dead-set against it. The only bodies I want to see are yours burning. ■





THE HOMELESS CAN EAT SHIT

The ugly stranger rises in front of me like a monster in a horror movie. "Got any spare change?" I avoid eye contact. "Got any spare change?" I pretend that I don't speak English. "Got any spare change?"

He places himself on garish display like a rejected circus performer. His tattered rags reek of sweat and piss. Green snot swings from his nostrils. Crusty flakes cover his face. Dried blood sticks to his pores. Rotting blisters swell on his feet. Crabs crawl in his scalp and beard. My kinda guy!

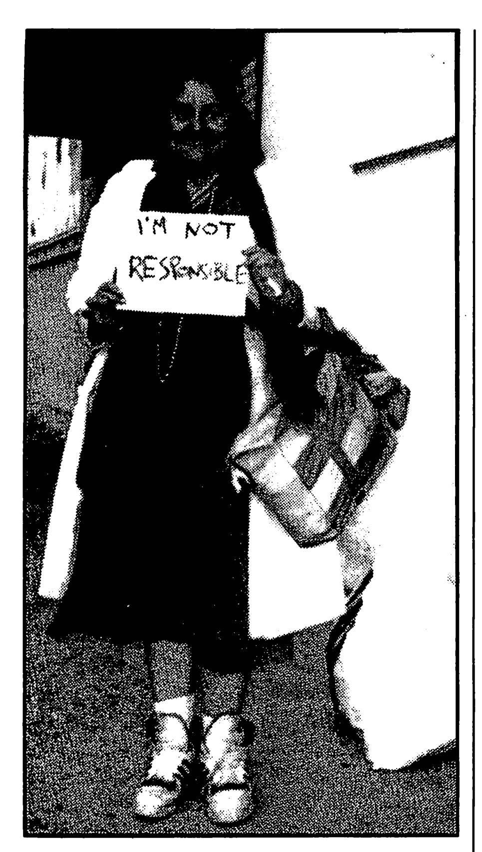
I don't know him, I don't like him, and I don't want to talk to him. But he takes it upon himself to strike up a conversation. He tells me I'm pretty. He orders me to smile. He asks me how I feel. Like an infant crying out for a nipple, he craves my attention. Wow! I have a brand-new friend. "Got any spare change?" Get the fuck out of my face!

He stares at my hand, hoping to see a coin. I stare back into his eyes and see blankness. "Got any spare change?" I got plenty of change, homie, but none of it's spare.

What do I look like, the fucking queen of England? Why don't I just hand over my checkbook so you can buy a shopping cart full of crack? I'm a concerned citizen, right? Wrong! What do I gain by throwing this bloodsucker a couple of dimes? I worked for everything I have. I didn't gamble it away or blow it on dope. Do you really think a quarter and three pennies are going to buy you a new life?

When I refuse to fork over my dough, this smelly subhuman has the nerve to say, "God bless you." From the looks of things, God doesn't give a rat's ass about you, you sorry glob of dung!

Ah, the homeless. Their "home" is a refrigerator box containing broken bottles and other useless objects. They peep out from under cardboard crates, cursing me under their breath. They parade up and down the street day after day, year after year, screaming at invisible foes. Their hearts are pumping, but their brains are stalled. Their minds are warped from booze, neglect, religion, and war. They contribute nothing to society. Their unnecessary lives are carried out on a



dead-end street. They are vegetables sprouting from the pavement. The homeless are the walking wounded, the living dead. They're America's finest.

It's getting to the point where I can't venture out to a newsstand, a 7-11, McDonald's, or the bank without some parasite attempting to get chummy. "How the heck are ya?" he asks me. He's my buddy because he wants something from me. You need some money for food, huh? You're hungry, are you? Well, open your mouth, because here comes a steaming brown loaf!

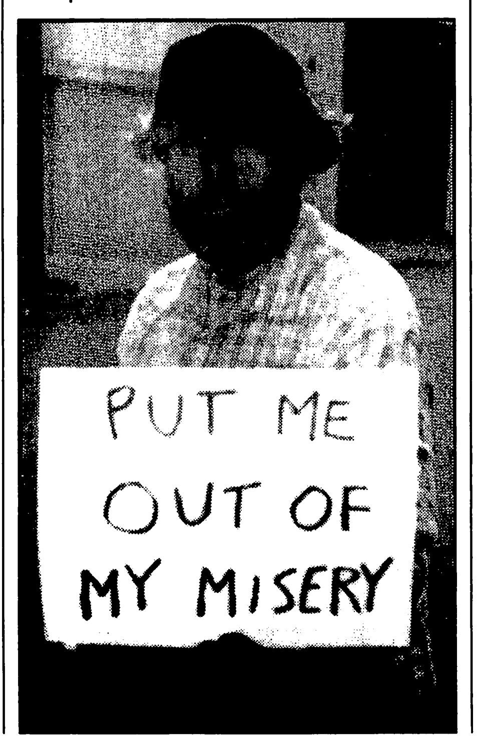
Most schmucks can attain entry-level employment if they really try. But the homeless are talentless. That is, unless you consider spraying Windex and picking lice from your underwear to be talents.

Many people like to say it's the government's fault. They cry that the feds threw these people onto the streets. What an idiotic notion! All the government did was to step back and force these people to live by their own wits. If you can't figure out how to survive, something very simple happens—you die, just as you would in the jungle. It's convenient to blame a distant symbol. People hate to take responsibility for their own actions. People hate to admit that they shape their own lives. People make me retch.

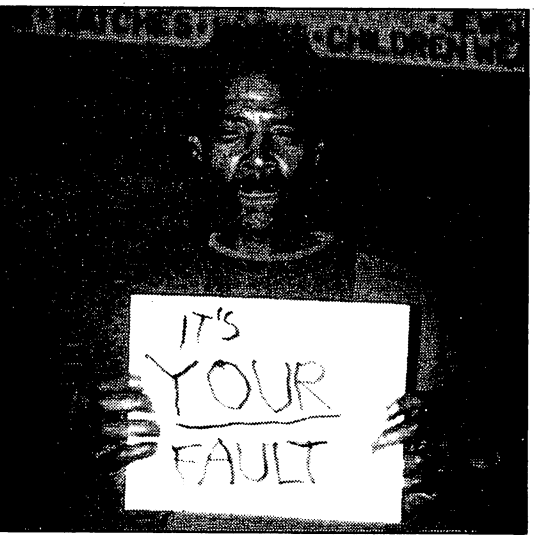
Where the fuck are their families? Everyone wants to blame politicians, but no one wants to point a finger at the family. Instead of looking at me or seeking aid from pedestrians, the homeless should contact their friends and relatives. Or is it possible that they've already alienated those people with their infantile dependence? Maybe they've pushed everyone's tolerance and goodwill a bit too far. Perhaps no one cares about them. They're truly alone.

If that breaks your heart, why don't you invite them to come and live with you? Because you're talking out of your asshole! You feel compassion up until the point where you'd actually have to *do* something. You couldn't stand the stench for five minutes. When you see them eating your last avocado, fouling your Jacuzzi, and using your crowbar to pry open your money vault, you won't be Saint Francis for long!

I'd tell the homeless to get off the stoop and take charge, but I'm dealing with human beings. It can't be done. I don't expect people to change and improve their lot. Most people are liars and scam artists. Many of the homeless appear down and out but really have thousands in the bank. Many of them just don't want to work. They're lazy and lack initiative. They enjoy siphoning money from passersby. Then they run with their accumulated change and purchase a bottle of Mad Dog or a jumbo crack rock.



There *are* a handful of people who were victimized due to no fault of their own. These are people who may have worked hard and tried their best but got smacked in the face with some disaster, a layoff, a fire, brutal violence, or just plain bad luck. These people should be helped. But not by



me. No fucking way. I have as much desire to aid the homeless as I do to suck their scabby dicks.

It's bleak out there. In the future, there will be more people, more traffic, and more aggravation. There will be fewer jobs and less housing. There will be more homeless. I will be expected to pay for their mistakes—their overdoses and liver problems, their court fees and prison costs. Shit—I could have used the cash to buy hair coloring and cat food!

But don't think for a minute that I prefer the rich. In my eyes, you're *all* green diarrhea. I share no sense of community with any of you. I have no feelings of brotherhood. If I had my way, both the homeless and the super-rich would be lunching on the same fecal banquet.

What fun can it be to merely survive? Why continue living? Instead of writhing on the sidewalk staring at me, why not end your suffering? Omit yourself. If you can't enjoy life, you might as well go out with dignity. The homeless are in their graves already. They should jump from the highest skyscraper or throw themselves onto railroad tracks. Better yet, cops ought to round them all up like cattle and start shooting.

In a perfect world, the homeless would be lying lifeless in the gutter. In death, they'd find the meaning which eluded them in life. They'd finally have a purpose. They'd be pigeon food. ■

MUSIC

No, I won't go to see your band. Or your friend's band. Or *any* band. I'd rather have an abortion. And I won't be at the club Friday night. I'd rather clip my toenails. And don't ask me who my favorite groups are. I don't have any. I don't listen to music. I'd rather have root canal.

Music calms the savage idiot. Calling oneself a 'musician' is like stamping the word 'STUPID' on your forehead. Musicians are the dumbest people I've ever met. Yet they shimmy through Hollywood's streets like anointed beings. They won't act so smug when I ram their guitar halfway up their ass and flip on the power switch.

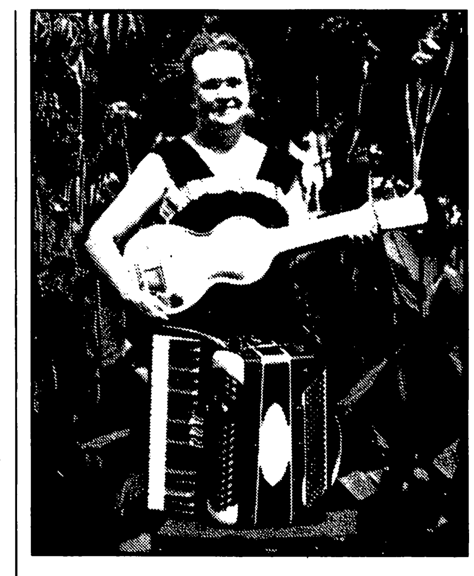
Pouting losers. They flaunt their fragility with temperamental, infantile, "artistic" outbreaks. While they lean back and receive installments on their trust funds, musicians like to pretend that they're suffering. Wait until I catheterize your prick with a drumstick. *Then* you can claim that you've suffered.

Sound-alikes, look-alikes, think-alikes. Music destroys their brains. Music makes them unable to reason. Musicians can read chords but can't spell. They comb their goatees but can't fill out a job application. They're inarticulate, illiterate tadpoles. Their minds are as stagnant as the water in a turtle aquarium. They strum guitars and stare into space. Musicians scream about rebellion, but they don't rebel against their simpleton status. They're so dense, they need their parents to address the envelope when they mail demo tapes to record companies. They nervously tug on their nipple rings as they pace back and forth, hoping to get signed. Don't worry—I'll sign you. I'll sign my name on your face with a twelve-inch blade.

Intelligence is a dirty word to music fans. They spastically bob their heads as the record spins 'round and 'round. The sounds leadenly stroke their reptile brains. Unable to think for themselves, they latch onto a magazine's hit list. And the rock critics who review the shit are even more pathetic than their readers.

"Let's rock." "Kick out the jams." "Get down." "Party out." "Sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll." Or even worse, "Fuck the government!" These retarded slogans spread from the airwaves onto T-shirts and toilet stalls.

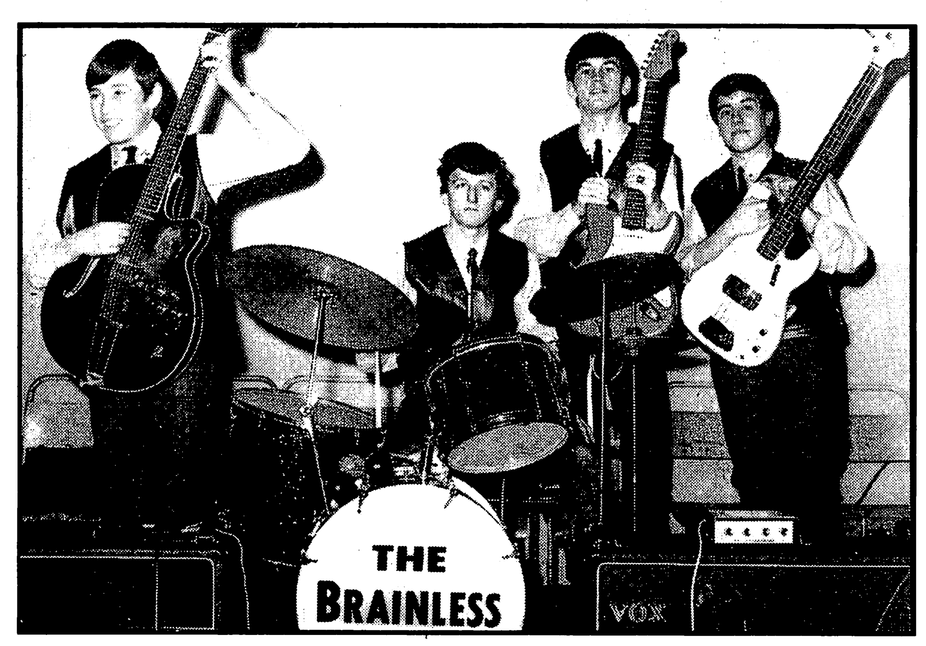
The only thing worse than a musician is a music fan. Music companies were created to bleed these suckers. Too weak to claim their own



identity, fans slip into each prefab fashion like they're squeezing into designer condoms. They gaze at the concert poster on the wall as the wailing guitars lobotomize them. They scrutinize each album cover, learning how to wear their hair, what clothes to buy, and how to make schoolyard clichés seem profound. Their sense of history starts three weeks ago. They watch MTV for days on end, numbing themselves until their mouths taste like steel. The same videos play over and over and over again, yet their eyes stay glued.

Musical fan-boys are mortified if someone's taste diverges from theirs. They ask total strangers what bands they like as if it's a matter of ethnic pride. You can kick them in the nuts with impunity, but don't dare slam their favorite group. You can fuck their mother in the ass, but woe unto you if you scratch their favorite record. Without their music, they collapse like slashed tires. They can't face the world without a tune banging away in their heads.

No wonder music's their best friend—nobody else is! They burrow like moles behind their cherished bands' identities. They latch onto their heroes' political beliefs without comprehending them. They learn which drugs their idols are addicted to and make sure to inject



BLOWS



them. But strung out high in their mansions, their idols laugh and laugh at them.

Wasted time. The gang gets together to fondle their instruments as if they're penile implants. They slowly copulate their guitars. They handle their amps, drums, and microphones like surgical tools. CD players and concert tickets are treated as carefully as a nuclear scientist handles plutonium. When a guitar string breaks, suicide follows.

The club opens. There's no need to think, reason, or discuss anything. The law dictates a cigarette in one hand and a drink in the other. People gab at the bar, and although no one can hear anything, they nod their heads in agreement. Everyone's in their own little clique, getting drunk, laughing at fart jokes, and acting horny. They believe that hunger, disease, war, and hatred would cease if all of humanity were just one big nightclub throbbing to the same dumb-ass tune.

The imbeciles crush together like aborted fetuses in a garbage can. You get pushed and shoved. Glassy-eyed cretins stomp on your feet. You gasp for air and hope you don't get trampled. You're dressed up so others can spill their drinks on you, slobber all over you, sneeze, cough, spit, and vomit on you. They wipe their asses and shake your hand. You look around and see the obnoxious video screen, the clumps of morons, and the frantic dancers. You hear the pounding music, feel the floor shake, and want to start shooting.

The curtain goes up. The musicians are excited. Sweat lines their underwear. It's their moment to be fabulous. The spotlight shines on their faces, bodies, and electrical appliances. Band members shake their hair and wiggle their tongues like mental defectives.

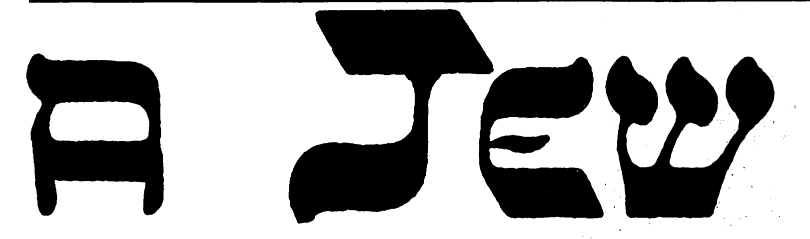
The ritual begins. It's a religious ceremony for smelly, drunk, tobacco-stained sheep. The audience watches with their mouths hanging open. The Pied Pipers onstage lead the rats into oblivion. The crowd melts into one mind, one feeble, short-circuited hamster brain. The amps knock all thoughts out of their heads like electroshock therapy. Arms wave. Bodies fly. Smoke rises. Filled with self-importance, people stand on their seats and light matches. When a band member gives them the thumbs-up, they feel radiant for days. If a rock star brushes by them, they feel as if they've touched the hem of Christ's garment.

The band performs for eight minutes and leaves. Twenty-two identical acts follow. It's four a.m. I'd rather be home changing cat litter.

The curtain goes down. Everyone's left with middle age, wrinkles, fat, hearing loss, shredded vocal cords, memory lapses, and brain damage. Nothing is more pathetic than an elderly musician with a wig, tattoos, earrings, Army boots, and a methadone habit. Standing alone at a bus stop, the aging musician clutches his beat-up guitar case. Cigarette butts are flung at him from passing cars. Even the winos crack jokes about him. He repeats himself like a worn tape loop. There will always be failure. There will always be music. ■



I Hate Being a Jew



I'm a Jew. I hate being one. I'm so Jewish, I even hate my self-hatred. I even hate the fact that I'm telling you this, and I hate myself for feeling that way. I feel like vomiting blood whenever I ponder my wretched status as a daughter of Judah.

My family, a pathetic lost tribe living on the tip of Coney Island, was stereotypically Jewish. Their outlook on life was about as sunny as a piece of shit floating down a gutter in a November rain. Their misery swallowed them up like the Red Sea engulfed the Egyptians.

If my family were God's chosen people, they didn't seem very happy about it. Our house was like a morgue. Inside, it was as cold and painful as an arctic wind blowing on a toothache. It smelled like moldy pickles mixed in embalming fluid. My family moped around in their self-styled concentration camp. I don't remember laughter. I recall walking stiffs who never smiled. Even on holidays, it felt like someone had just died. The menorah was always half-unlit, never half-lit. DOOM.

My kinfolk were so hung up about things going right, they made everything wrong. Even when I swore that things were fine, they'd skip right over it in their quest to unearth some possible calamity. If I bit into a piece of candy, they warned about cavities. If I had a pimple, they thought it was cancer. If I had my period, they were sure it was hemophilia. If my lips were chapped, they diagnosed leprosy.

Oy vey! My family members were only happy when they were unhappy. Breathing, sleeping, and eating, they suffered. They were experts at pointing out the worst that could happen. They were convinced they'd get screwed no matter what they did. They couldn't conceive of being anything but the victim. They specialized in finding problems. If someone complimented them, they were suspicious. If I bought something, they bitched about the price. If a check came in the mail, they worried about taxes. Where I saw opportunity, they perceived threats. If I planned a vacation, they were certain I'd get mugged. If I got a new pet, they'd say it carried diseases. If I said I liked something, they didn't.

They wouldn't dare leave anything to chance. They scurried around like kosher squirrels storing their nuts for the next Holocaust. They stockpiled toilet paper, toothpaste, and Q-Tips. Night tables were crammed with lotions, ointments, tubes, inhalers, pills, and decongestants. Yet with all these medications, they were still sick in the head. They longed for so much security, they might as well have lived in a casket.

My father was a weak shell of a man chained to his parents like a Hebrew slave. He belted out his bitter pain by singing in Catskills talent contests, sounding like a



broken motel-room heater. The whole audience snickered at him, including us. My mother was no better, though. She slammed doors on all my boyfriends, went through all my drawers, opened all my mail, and eavesdropped on all my phone conversations. My brother ran around like Jerry Lewis with one pant leg longer than the other, begging my parents for advice. My three uncles sat in the kitchen without their dentures, moaning about blood pressure and asthma.

When they ate, they emitted snorts and grunts not worthy of swine. They grabbed at food in a completely crass fashion. They gobbled with their mouths open, yapping while chewing. Pieces of grub got spit out and landed on the tablecloth in crude lumps. Gravy dribbled from their jowls down onto their pants in one ugly stream. When they finished, the slobs would lift their plates and lick them clean.

Then, out of nowhere, these demented sons of Abraham would throw knickknacks off the mantelpiece, scream until the veins in their necks popped out, and tear open their shirts in self-pitying agony.

The relatives were just as bad. These two-faced gossips would drop by uninvited, poking their big noses up my ass to uncover my darkest secrets. They all looked the same: potato-shaped bodies, wrinkled grimaces of pain, and stooped posture. Their physiques were molded in the same depressed shape as their emotions.

And then came the moment that they had spent their lives rehearsing for: death. Cancer finally struck my mother. It didn't take the old man long to marry a Russian battle-axe fresh off the boat. She's his fat little *bubeleh.* She loves to hear him kvetch. She loves to take his money. I guess papa found a new family, one more Jewish than me. I fantasize about dressing up like an SS officer and visiting him on Passover to slaughter him like the sacrificial lamb he always dreamed of being. I'll force-feed him my shit like it's a matzo dumpling!

My Jewish family is thankfully almost all dead now. Unfortunately, they had the last laugh. They succeeded in making me miserable. That cloud of gloom hangs over me like nuclear winter. I seldom smile. It takes a lot to make me laugh. I'm in a constant state of apprehension. I focus on the negative. If twenty good things happen, I'll dwell on one mishap. I expect to hear only bad news. I can't handle crisis situations. I look for the worst in people and easily find it. When someone sends me a greeting card, I'll turn it over to check the price. I'm always counting my money. People tell me that I look sad, as if something devastating happened. I wear three thousand years of persecution on my face. Just by being around those nerve-wracking mental leeches and their maddening behavior, an invisible Star of David has been branded on my forehead.

I wish my family had lived next to the Hitlers. At least the Nazis knew how to dress and how to turn their anger outward. I wish there was a perfume I could sprinkle on myself to mask the Hebraic stench. I even have a name for it: Final Solution. But the oppressive smell won't go away until I'm stone-cold dead, a lifeless Jewess in my own private Auschwitz. ■





KILLING ME SOFTLY, ROUGHLY, AND JUST ABOUT EVERY OTHER FUCKING WAY IMAGINABLE: 100 SPECTACULAR SUICIDES

Hopeless. You see the big sun, the green grass, the happy, happy kids riding bikes and sucking on popsicles, and you feel shut off from it, an invisible dust particle floating in the shade. So you walk away from the crowd and keep walking. The world flickers on and off around you like an old TV. Wallpaper-patterned film negatives fly past. If you listen closely, you can hear a low, yawning drone a hundred million years old. You sink into the ear-splitting quiet. As you turn a corner, you're nose-to-nose with death.

You surrender. The blood falls like rain. A big metal vacuum cleaner latches onto your mouth and sucks out the breath. The grey waves come darker and darker. The rest is oily-smooth blackness as you skid through space on an icicle sled. Lights out. Nighty-night.

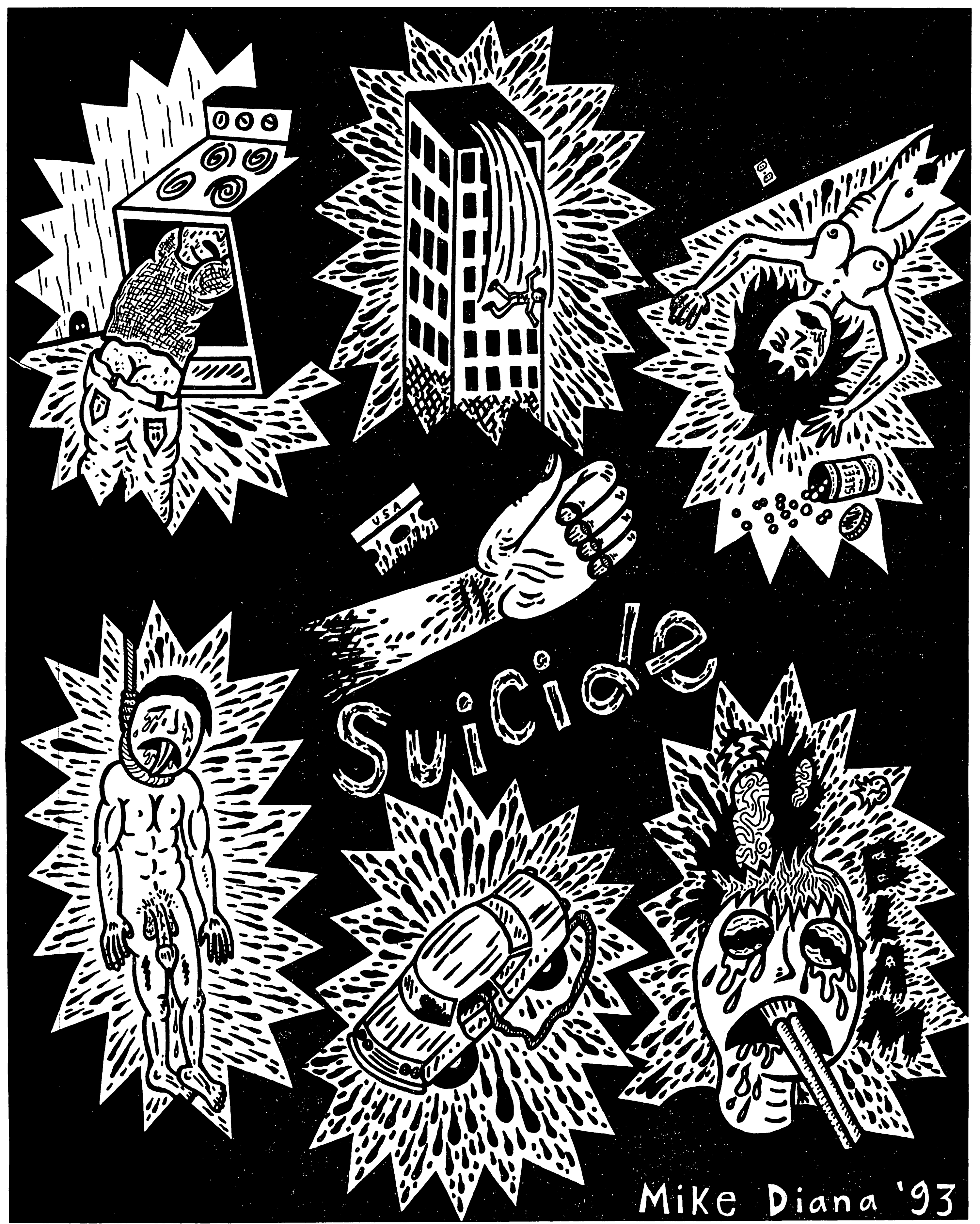
Let's talk about suicide, the unforgivable sin. The topic induces a static discomfort, thoughts of unutterable sacrilege. Taking one's own life flies against every supposed survival instinct, yet it happens everywhere in numbers greater than murder. Killing others can be understood as a byproduct of food-chain economics, but killing yourself allows for no such easy rationales. Murder's pretty much a cottage entertainment industry, but people recoil at suicide. They pussyfoot around it, trying not to rouse it from slumber. While studying murder can bring the emotional release that comes with seeing a good explosion, mulling over suicide is more like watching the walls slowly crumble on a condemned building. There's no primal-scream payoff.

That's because people like looking at a car crash as long as it's not their own. They won't flinch at hours of atrocity footage but can't handle a nick on their own finger. Humans are numbly aware that they're only a trauma or two away from yanking their own plug. If you're the depressive type, suicide is never far away, always tapping on your shoulder and breathing softly down your neck.

Personally, we're pro-choice on the matter. But we feel it's better to fight death with your last scrap of strength, to take your pain out on someone else. They deserve it more. When *we* kill, it ain't gonna be ourselves.

But here we are, serving up a cornucopia of self-extinction. We hope all of our enemies find it useful. A few notes: Merely causing one's own death doesn't constitute suicide. Some clear level of intent has to be displayed. So the surfeit of rock-star overdoses and autoerotic fatalities, as enjoyable as they are, aren't included here. To qualify for this list, a person had to *try* to die, and with the exception of a few Honorable Mentions, they had to succeed in killing themselves. There aren't many things more detestable than a failed suicide, a two-time loser strung out in a half-dead purgatory. We've also mostly steered away from suicides where there were hints of coercion. Thus, no kamikazes, but the Mount Mihara suicides more than compensate. Jonestown is glaringly absent, but that was covered in the last issue as a mass murder. We make up for it with the Old Believers, Masada, and the Koresh debacle.

It's one of life's cruel paradoxes that truly worthless people never appreciate their worthlessness and thus aren't prone to commit suicide. That's why we have room in our otherwise impregnable hearts for the individuals on this list. They all display an emotive capacity which makes them superior to the clueless fucks who drive around in their tiny cars and never consider killing themselves. The dumb jerkoffs who swagger with beer-bellied self-assurance are the ones who *should* be thinking about it, and *seriously*. In contrast, those who contemplate, attempt, or complete suicide feel that life sucks a fat, purple dick, and they're right. But if there were more people like them, this world wouldn't be half as bad. Ironically, it's the *non*-suicidal who make life unbearable.



As we go to press, Mike Diana is facing obscenity charges for the "crime" of publishing a magazine called *Boiled Angel.* Send cash and other tokens of support to Mike at P.O. Box 5254, Largo, Florida 34649-5254.



Her consonant-clotted name is unknown, but this daughter of *Polska*'s self-mutilating doggedness warrants her inclusion on our honor roll. Though available details are flimsy, this story involves a case of gustatory self-abasement even odder than the gallons of sperm rumored to have been guzzled by Rod Stewart a few years back. What *is* known is that this nineteenth-century maiden got the raw end of a failed romance. When her lover abandoned her, cavalierly burying his kielbasa in another bed of sauerkraut, she began to eat compulsively. Whereas many spurned slits turn to chocolate-drowned cheesecake or fistfuls of bonbons, she did not. Neither did she find comfort in potato pie, potato pudding, or lonely bowls of potato soup. Instead, she put herself on an iron-rich diet. Over five months, she ate a hundred and one pins, three knives, seven window bolts, four spoons, a brass crucifix, twenty nails, and nineteen coins. She also scarfed down three glass fragments, a rock, and two rosary beads. It is uncertain which trinket dealt the death blow, but one imagines the casket jingling as it was lowered into the cold Polish soil.



According to the book *The Traitor Within*, a middle-aged woman in Canada committed suicide by ingesting fishhooks, open safety pins, a few four-inch sewing needles, handfuls of nails, tacks, and some corkscrews. She chased it all down with broken glass.



The *New York Times* of October 31, 1925, cites an unnamed British suicide in whose stomach was found "[a] piece of lead piping, two pieces of slate pencil, two pieces of metal boot tips, four nails, two needles, part of a safety pin, [a] pair of small tweezers, [a] piece of glass, [a] collapsible top metal cap, and [a] small piece of rubber."



In 1919, over two pounds of housewares were found in the digestive system of Massachusetts prisoner Charles W. Buzzell. Among the items uncovered were: one hundred and seventy-nine glass slivers; most of a safety razor; a two-foot dog chain; a buckle; and several nails, screws, and staples. Buzzell had gone to the prison doctor with complaints of "indigestion." After emergency surgery, he survived.

#2
Colleen Applegate
FROM GIRL NEXT DOOR TO STROKE-FILM WHORE

Purity is a wondrous, strange thing, the morning song of nature, an effervescent stream of thawing winter ice. It is the creamy white wool of a lamb drinking from that stream, a guileless little lamb skipping through verdant meadows under saffron rays of sun.

But put a farmer in that meadow, a pickled old bastard with a giant red cock, and get him to cram his greasy Johnson into the squealing lamb's tight ass, and the fun begins. Purity's as boring as bread mold. It really only works for infants and dead people.

Colleen Applegate oozed purity like tree sap. Everything about her—the rosy-cheeked name, her pastoral hometown of Farmington, Minnesota, her prim Catholic family, her role as high-school cheerleader—bespoke high morals and a solid hymen.

That's why dicks rose in unison at the sight of her Midwestern cherry pie spreading across cum-splattered movie screens nationwide. In a porn industry glutted with skanky, toothless female pincushions, Colleen's implied purity was as refreshing as a wintergreen breath mint.

Her transition from pompom girl to sperm spittoon began in March, 1982, when the eighteen-year-old lass and her boyfriend drove to Hollywood in a black El Camino. Within weeks, she became a professional twat huckster, flashing the bush for sixth-rate porno shutterbugs. Her pristine quim caused a stir, and she soon graduated to layouts for *Penthouse* and *Hustler*, her snatch snatching up to two grand per session.

By the fall of '82, she was starring in sex films under the pseudonym "Shauna Grant," a name more redolent of heady vaginal fumes. She would sit on dicks in a total of thirty features, *Meisterwerks* such as *Suzie Superstar, Virginia,* and *Flesh and Laces.* If her acting showed the emotional range of sea kelp, no one seemed to care. In the midst of getting herpes and an abortion, she received three nominations from the Erotic Film Awards.

Back in Farmington, her family put on the best face possible. Her boyfriend, with whom she had split after a few weeks in L.A., made sure to blab to fellow Minnesotans about Colleen's new career. Everyone in town knew that Colleen, the eldest of five Applegate children, was spreading it like peanut butter. At school, malicious pranksters plastered Colleen's lurid layouts on her sister Veronica's locker. When Colleen visited home in the fall of 1983, patting blood from her coke-smeared nose, her family

Colleen Applegate doing what she did best.

must have wished that the earth would open up and swallow them whole.

She assured her folks that she had quit the sex racket and was settled in Palm Springs with a man named Jake Ehrlich. She neglected to tell them that Jake was a coke dealer who kept her strung out on powder. Big Jake was busted in February, 1984. Adrift in the desert, Colleen blew Jake's remaining cash on nose candy. At the Erotic Film Awards in March, the nearly penniless gash struck a deal to lick more on-screen dicks in exchange for more blue money. On March 21, the night before shooting for the new film was to begin, she pulled out a .22-caliber rifle from beneath Jake's bed and blasted through her coke-soaked cranium. She died two days later.

Two subsequent TV films were based on Colleen's transition from small-town cheerleader to sleaze-flick prick-pouch: the fictionalized *Shattered Innocence* and *Death of a Porn Queen,* a PBS documentary. While chastity's perfume lasts only as long as a rose petal fluttering in the wind, the stink of carnality wafts on forever.



If you stare at Diane Arbus's photos long enough, it's almost impossible *not* to consider suicide. There's a fatally depressing bluntness to her snapshots, a dead, bludgeoning grey which spreads inward from all four corners. A critic spoke of her ability to "X-ray" her subjects' emotions. Arbus photographed what she termed the "bloodied people": Russian midgets, Jewish giants, flabby nudists, crying babies, Greenwich Village bulldykes, greasy muscle-men, flea-bitten drag queens, bored hermaphrodites, scowling old women, topless dancers, deformed patriots, doped-out couples, and wrinkled society matrons. One of her last sessions, involving a group of Mongoloid adults cavorting in an open field clad in ghost capes and skull masks, captures a bottomless death vibe which the viewer is never quite able to shake.



But for all of her subject matter's lowlife trappings, Arbus was a product of uptown wealth. Her family owned a Fifth Avenue department store, and the woman born Diane Nemerov grew up in an eleventh-floor Central Park West apartment staffed with maids, chefs, and nannies. She was the archetypal slummer, an upper-crusty, wannabe-funky boho chick. "I was born way up the ladder of middle-class respectability," she confessed to a photography class, "and I've been clambering down as fast as I could ever since." However, unlike most of those cut from the *faux pauvreté* cloth, Diane was blessed with an incandescent talent.

Suicide

At eighteen she married Allan Arbus, the mousy guy who played a shrink on *M*A*S*H,* and the two worked together as fashion photographers for years. But she grew to hate the slick, stifling advertising world, and an emotionally deflating breakup with Allan coincided with a swelling interest in disturbing subject matter. So in the early sixties, like Weegee twenty years before her, she set out in search of Manhattan's freaks, derelicts, and irreparably wounded human debris. With the black leather jacket and concentration-camp short hair of a commie art commando, she trudged about New York weighed down like a Christmas tree with photographic equipment. Reveling in her brown teeth and sharp female odors, she zeroed in on all that was unpleasant. "What are you doing on such a gorgeous day?" asked an art director who bumped into her one sunny Saturday morning. "Trying to find some unhappy people," came Diane's stony reply.

Throughout the sixties, she compiled a portfolio rivaling that of any photographer before or since. At earlier exhibitions, her photos were covered with spittle from incensed observers, but as the decade wore on, her mastery became evident to all but the most stalwart art-world reactionaries.

Yet it grew harder for Arbus to divorce herself from her downbeat material. She kept her apartment dark and surrounded her bed with her latest grainy black-and-white prints. She sometimes joined in the orgies of the dwarves and nudists she photographed. As the seventies dawned, she described herself as smitten by "monumental blues" made worse by insomnia, hepatitis, and worries about encroaching age. She spoke eerily of the aforementioned Mongoloid photo shoot, of her discomfiture that the retarded adults didn't look straight into the lens like her earlier subjects, that she felt unable to "control" them.

She had loathed the oppressive New York summer ever since childhood, and the summer of '71 seemed worse than ever. "My work doesn't do it for me anymore," she told friends in mid-July. On the morning of July 26, she slid a photo of a death mask under the door of a friend in her apartment building. The next day, her close compadre Marvin Israel became concerned when Diane failed to answer the phone. Israel entered Diane's apartment on the twenty-eighth to find her lying in an empty bathtub, fully clothed and fully dead. Her wrists were slashed, although she was later found to have died of a barbiturate overdose. Her diary was opened to July 26, under which date she had written "The Last Supper."

There were unsubstantiated rumors that Diane Arbus took pictures of herself while she died. Lisette Model, a photography teacher of Arbus's back in the fifties, received a suicide note but never released it to the public. "I want to photograph what is evil," Arbus had told Model back when Diane was Lisette's student. She succeeded, but evil swallowed her up as part of the deal.



It was the free-lovin' year of 1968, and Linda Ault felt she was old enough to spend a Friday night away from home. It got lonely out in the Arizona desert, and at twenty-one, she couldn't be faulted if she sought solace in a man's arms. Besides, he wasn't just some bum, he was an Air Force lieutenant.

Nature, though, had dealt the red-headed accounting major a set of gila monsters for parents. They evidently felt that she was scattering her eggs about like cactus pollen. They didn't appreciate the fact that the young officer spent the night landing on their daughter's airstrip and that Linda, instead of resisting, seemed more than willing to lube the flyboy's fuselage. The worst part of all was that she didn't seem a damned bit sorry.

They decided they were going to learn her a lesson. But after whipping Linda with a mesquite branch, Mrs. Ault felt that the girl didn't exhibit sufficient remorse. On Saturday afternoon, they withdrew her from college. Linda remained unpenitent. "I told Linda," Mrs. Ault would later say, "that after all she had put so many people through and wasn't sorry, maybe she would suffer over an animal. She loved animals."

On Sunday morning the Aults, intending to "wake Linda up," commandeered their daughter and her pet dog Beauty into the desert scrub. The Aults forced Linda to shovel a small grave for Beauty. "The best way is through the head," Mrs. Ault told Linda, handing her a loaded pistol and holding Beauty out in front of her. Linda hesitated. Did they really expect her to kill it? This was a dog whose poop she had cleaned, whose genitals she may have stroked in softer moments, a varmint who obviously gave her more emotional satisfaction than her crustacean-hearted parents. So instead of drilling lead into the cowering canine, she tore open her own head with one shot, departing this vale of tears and leaving Beauty at her parents' questionable mercy.



Nebraska letter-carrier Harry Howell shot himself in August, 1922, after his dog died.

HONORABLE MENTION

When Donna Mayberry, president of California's Southern Alameda County Humane Society, decided to kill herself with carbon monoxide in 1988, she took her two dogs and sixteen cats along with her.



One week after her dog was put to sleep, Mary H. Lynton of East Orange, New Jersey, followed the mutt into eternity by inhaling gas from her kitchen in July of 1928.



Crying, "I want to die, too," after his Boston terrier Peggy bit the dust, nine-year-old Russell Mueller of Chicago shot himself in the thigh in January, 1922, crippling himself for life.



British citizen Ramsawa Singh purposely overdosed in 1978, leaving a suicide note for his wife and one for Carlo, his pet racing pigeon.

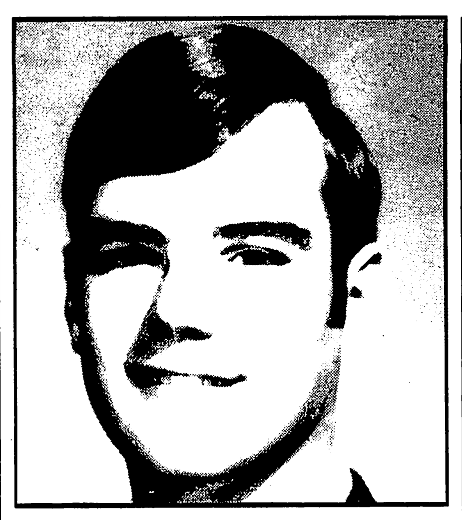
#5
Craig Badiali & Joan Fox

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE. . . . IF IT DOESN'T WORK, KILL YOURSELF

It was the best of times and it was the worst of times. No, on second thought, it was just the worst of times. It was a time of fringed suede jackets, velvet posters, hash oil, and tangerine incense. It was an era of swirling change, radical upheaval, and communally shared crotch lice. Kids nationwide followed the demonic musical gospels of Leonard Cohen and Buffy Sainte-Marie. With anti-military militance, they joined hands and swayed their dirty asses. They placed sticks of grass between their quivering lips, struck matches, and blasted off into Nowheresville.

Craig and Joan were a pair of wide-eyed Jersey teens who were just bonkers about peace. They were the type who made a point of befriending even the misfits, the sort who were eager to share a sandwich with you and ask how you're feelin'. They were up, up, up with people.

First there was Craig, a poetry-writing, guitar-strumming, protest-song-singing young feller known for nursing sick birds back to health. He was a confirmed Peter, Paul & Mary fan whose



favorite PP&M tune, "The Great Mandala," dealt with a boy who starved himself to death after being imprisoned for opposing a war. Craig got very angry when kids in class laughed casually about war casualties. "You wonder," he wrote in one poem, "how a man could look/at the face of another/and kill him." Ominously, he identified with *The Catcher in the Rye.*



Then there was Joan, an uptight cheerleader, field-hockey player, and class treasurer. She also wrote poems, played guitar, and sang protest songs. For the most part, she did whatever Craig did.

On October 14, 1969, Craig's brother passed by Craig's bedroom and spotted him writing a series of letters. That night, Craig burned most of his poetry in a backyard incinerator. He also removed everything from his bedroom walls except one item, a sign which read, "DON'T GO AWAY MAD—JUST GO AWAY." Over in her house, Joan was busy writing letters, too.

The next day, "Moratorium Day," the pair joined more than four thousand others for an anti-war rally at Glassboro State College. They left the demonstration before it was over. Later in the afternoon, Craig told a friend that he had a bum trip when he sensed a lack of "true feeling" at the gathering, that some attendees seemed more interested in listening to a Mets game on the radio than striving for global peace.

That night, Craig and Joan drove in Craig's blue Ford Falcon to a rural road and left the engine running. About twelve hours later, on a dewy autumn morning, a farmer found the car parked under a buttonwood tree. The windows were entirely caked on the inside with black soot, interrupted only by Craig's face, which was smooshed against the driver's-side glass. The farmer notified police, who opened the car doors to find Joan slumped *against* Craig's shoulder. The pair's skin was fire-engine red, pointing to carbon-monoxide poisoning. Two guitars sat on the back seat. Twenty-four sealed air-mail envelopes had been placed on the front dash. They were suicide notes, and although police refused to release their contents, two of the letters eventually leaked to the press. According to Craig and Joan's request, the tormented peaceniks were buried next to each other. "They wanted peace?" taunted a hawkish type at a local bar. "Well, they got peace."

SUICIDE

Somehow, Craig and Joan believed that their double self-cessation would force folks to embrace life's sanctity and end war forevermore. Mystifyingly, their valiant gesture of love failed to end the problems in Vietnam. Craig and Joan should have heeded a slogan popular at the time: "Killing for peace is like fucking for virginity."

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Craig's farewell poem, sent to an undisclosed recipient):

Why?/Because we see/that people just/ won't do and say/what they feel/and you can't just/tell someone to./It seems that/people are only/touched by death/and maybe people/will be touched/enough to look into/their lives/and if just one/person is touched/enough to do/something constructive/and peaceful with/their life, then/maybe our death/was worth it.

Why—because we/love our fellow/ man enough to/sacrifice our lives/so that they will/try to find the/ecstasy in just/being alive.

Love and Peace,
Craig Badiali.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Craig's letter to his friend Frank DiGenova):

. . . I waited until last to write you.

My life is complete except all my brothers are in trouble—war, poverty, hunger, hostility. My purpose is to make them understand all this trouble. Maybe this will start a chain reaction

of awakening, love, communication. I've been so down, so goddam [sic] down, I can't get up. Not even pot helps.

Read my poetry and make people understand how I feel. Make them tell each other how beautiful they are. Take my life into yours. If I sound strange, it's because I am insane with sorrow and distress. Please make them see!

Love and Peace, Craig.



No one knew who the haggard-looking man was. As a small group sat before a fireplace in a Leeds, England, hotel lobby two days before Christmas, 1856, it didn't seem to matter—he was welcome to share in the season's joy. Appearing troubled, he had wandered in from the cold night, requested a pipe, and sat peevishly before the fire.

It didn't have to happen. He could have thrown another log on the fire, sipped some tea, and quietly passed wind. He could have warmed his toes, cracked his knuckles, and inquired about rugby scores. He could have read *A Christmas Carol* while chewing on a buttered scone. If he had felt the yuletide spirit, he could have roasted marshmallows and handed them out to indigent children. But the dancing flames seemed only to remind him of some personal hell. He just sat there, looking pissed.

Ten minutes passed. He approached the fire and placed a poker into the embers. He waited until it glowed red-hot. He then removed it and tapped it on the floor, knocking off all the



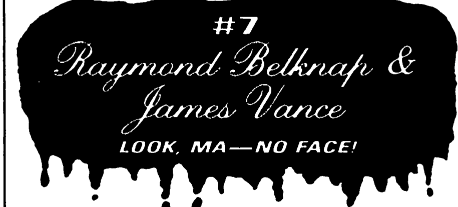
surplus dirt and ash. Then, in the manner of a sword-swallower, he shoved the simmering ingot down his throat. Within an instant, the pink mucoid tissues inside his mouth had sizzled into a blood-spurting charcoal burger. Hotel patrons wrested the poker away from Barker (who probably was unable to bark at this point) and spirited him away to a doctor's care. Over the course of the next five days, someone asked him why he had attempted to become a human shish kebab. Barker said he had no idea. Then, as should only happen with everyone who can't explain their actions, he died.



In January, 1888, at his home in the British town of Falmouth, a certain Rear-Admiral Versturme, sixty-two, shoved a red-hot poker in his guts several times, killing himself.



Three years before Versturme's suicide, Thomas Roycroft of Chatham, England, placed a red-hot poker's handle on the floor, with the searing tip pointing upward, and brought his throat down on the fiery lance, which penetrated through his throat, his tongue, and up into the roof of his mouth.



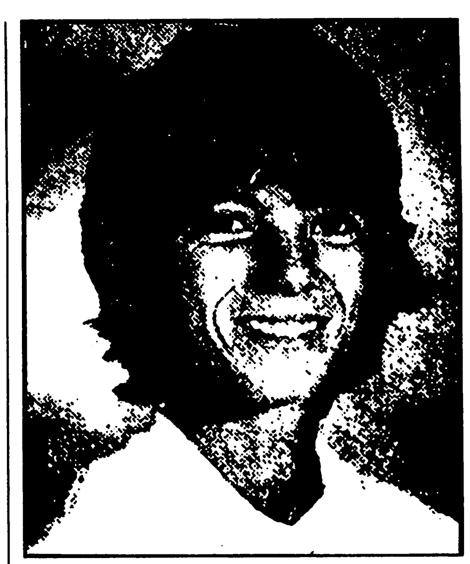
YYEEEAAGGGHH! The castrato voice of Rob Halford, Judas Priest's leather-swaddled songbird, rattled the thin bedroom walls of the Sparks, Nevada, tract home. It was the Priest's *Stained Class* album, a Christmas gift from Raymond Belknap, eighteen, to his best buddy, twenty-year-old James Vance. The two had been smoking weed and chugging brews all afternoon, playing the LP over and over and louder and louder. RRRROWLLL!

After several headbanging hours, the pair barricaded the door and began tearing the shit out of Belknap's bedroom. The only things they didn't wreck were the turntable and *Stained Class*. Flushed with metal mania, they made an abrupt suicide pact. Belknap grabbed a sawed-off shotgun along with two shells and jumped out of the first-story window with Vance.

It was near dusk on December 23, 1985. The two beat a path into a church playground a block away. Belknap hugged his best friend, sat on the merry-go-round, stuck the gun under his chin, and blew his head off his skinny shoulders. Vance, who until that point hadn't been sure whether the suicide pact was just some drunken teen macho bluster, was besieged with thoughts. If he didn't go through with it, he'd betray his best friend. If he didn't shoot himself, the cops might charge him with murder. He lifted the blood-dripping musket, loaded a shell, placed the muzzle under his chin, and let it rip.

He lived. The buckshot tore through his cheeks, teeth, jaw, and nose. His mug was damaged beyond recognition, resembling Popeye after a chemical face peel. When he was well enough to ride his bike, he pedaled around the neighborhood and scared small children with his Quasimodo visage. He even fathered a child with a woman who undoubtedly had a strong stomach and a roaring sex drive. Vance endured throbbing pain for the next three years, becoming addicted to prescription downs and undergoing several operations. He lapsed into a coma on Thanksgiving Day, 1988, apparently as the result of a self-administered overdose of painkillers. He croaked six days later.

A few months after he bungled his suicide pact with Belknap, Vance made the disquieting



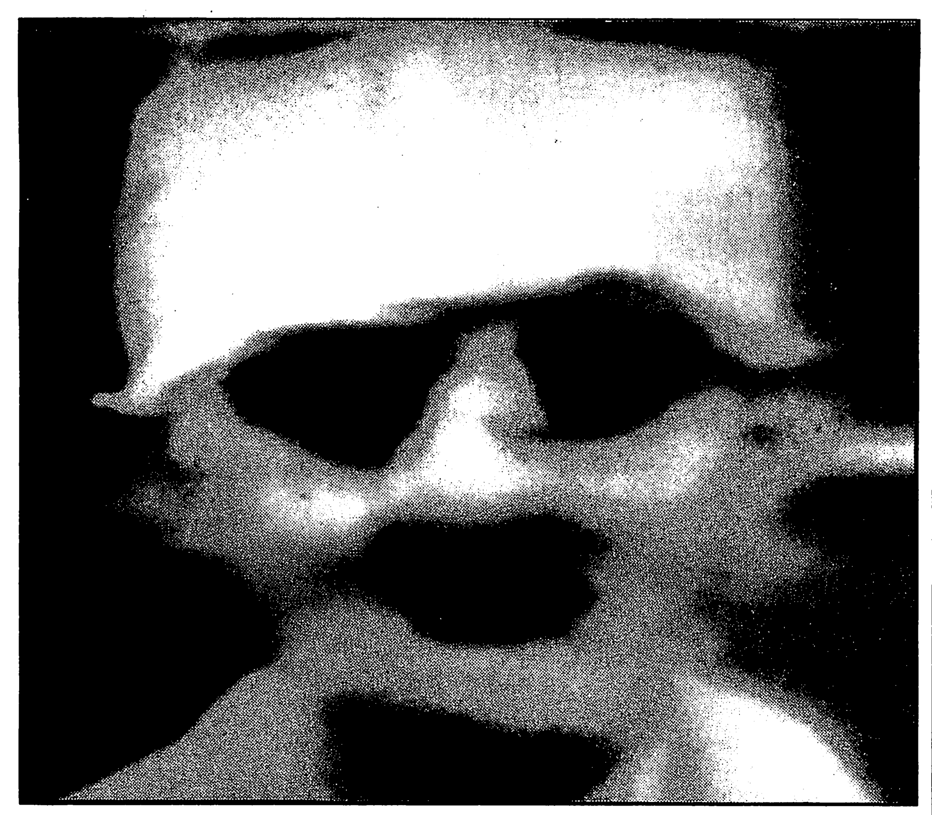
Belknap: typically pimply heavy-metal delinquent.

claim that Judas Priest's music gave him and his friend the idea to kill themselves. "All of a sudden, we got a suicide message," he stated, "and we got tired of life." He wrote a letter to Aunetta Roberson, Belknap's mother, explaining his odd motivation: "I believe that alcohol and heavy metal music, such as 'Judas Priest,' led us or even 'mesmerized' us into beliveing [sic] that the answer to 'life was death.' "

The boys' parents, perhaps to reclaim a measure of dignity for their sons, or maybe sniffing a mother lode, filed a multi-million-dollar lawsuit against Judas Priest and CBS Records. Vivian Lynch, a lawyer who helped file the suit, alleged that hidden subliminal messages on *Stained Class* pushed "the boys over the edge into eternity....[Judas Priest] created the filth and created the garbage that polluted the minds of the young people of Nevada, and they continue to do so." Lynch's bilious distaste for Judas Priest didn't prevent her from standing in line during the trial to get an autograph from the band.



Vance: not a bad-lookin' kid...



... until he blew most of his face off with a shotgun.

In court, the legal wrangling over hidden messages and backward masking was worthy of Spinal Tap or the furthest fringes of born-again Satanic hysteria. Using digitized stereo equipment to play *Stained Class* backward, prosecution witnesses tried to convince a skeptical courtroom that the band had purposely planted phrases such as "Fuck the Lord... fuck all of you... let's be dead... try suicide," and the capper, "DO IT," in order to nudge gullible fans over the precipice. "I heard a 'D,'" said Vance's mother regarding the pivotal phrase, "but I didn't hear the rest of it. I became too upset." Defense witnesses contended that what sounded like "DO IT" were actually "expressive grunts... combined with the sound of a Leslie guitar and a high-hat cymbal."

Did the victims' parents ever consider the possibility that their sons' suicides could be blamed on factors other than alleged commands issued by a combo of aging, gaseous Brits? Was there any significance to the fact that Belknap's mother had been married four times or that court records showed that the boy's father physically abused him? Could anything be made of the fact that Vance's biological father split from the family before Vance was born, that both Vance's mother and stepfather were said to have drinking problems, or that James was beaten by his mother as a child?

What about the boys themselves? Did it change matters when one considered that Belknap was a high-school dropout who used weed, alcohol, coke, and speed? That he once stole four hundred and fifty dollars from an employer? That he was caught flashing his nuts at women? That a mere week before his suicide, he was charged with shooting a dart gun at a neighbor's pet?

You could ask the same questions about Vance: Did a known predilection for marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, alcohol, heroin, LSD, barbiturates, and PCP somehow impair his judgment? What could be gleaned from the fact that at age seven, he was sent to a therapist for tying a belt around his head and pulling out clumps of his hair in class? Or that he attempted to strangle his mother a year later? Or that he assaulted his mother as a teenager and threatened her on separate occasions with a hammer and a loaded pistol? Wasn't it strange that in the two years before trying suicide, he had run away from home thirteen times? Didn't it seem odd that both boys collected guns, spoke about becoming mercenaries, and frequently talked about committing mass murder in the Reno area?

The judge seemed to think so. He ruled that heavy metal could not be blamed for the teenagers' deaths, making the world safe once again for Judas Priest. However, he left open the possibility that so-called subliminal messages could impel someone to kill themselves. As we go to press, Belknap and Vance's parents have filed a new lawsuit against Halford and his leathery gang.



The Bible reports that Judas Iscariot, one of Christ's twelve apostles, hanged himself after turning the Big Kahuna over to the Romans for thirty pieces of silver.

#8
The Bergenfield Four
EXHAUSTED

Every high school has its burnouts, pitted against jocks and honor students in a perpetually hostile triad. Scruffily clustered in the school's smoking lane, they are readily identified by the runic icons of mass-produced metal: concert sweat shirts, ancient denim, scraggly adolescent moustaches, bloodshot eyes, and resinous fingers. They live low-rent soap operas revolving around cheap dope, indifferent parents, and failed romance. Facing a long, meaningless adulthood, they party desperately.

Within the vast Superfund clean-up site known as north Jersey sits the city of Bergenfield, a brown little working-class town with more than its share of burnouts. Tommy Olton and Tommy Rizzo, both nineteen, and sisters Cheryl and Lisa Burress (seventeen and sixteen, respectively) fit the mold well enough. Bergenfield's police chief described them as "pain-in-the-ass-type kids." All were dropouts except Lisa, and she was on her way.

Of the four, Olton seemed the most troubled. His father had killed himself with a gun when the boy was fourteen. Tommy's biology teacher would recall how he sat through class "with his head down on his desk" and once slit his wrists with lab scalpels. He had a rep as a free-drinking hell-raiser who spent time in and out of rehab. His friend Tommy Rizzo worked intermittently for a construction firm and thought about enlisting in the Army. He, too, had been treated for substance abuse. The Burress sisters' father had died of an alleged drug overdose back in the late seventies. They made no secret of the fact that they hated their stepfather.

To compound their aimless ennui, four disturbing teen deaths hit Bergenfield over the summer of 1986. Two males, purported to be best friends, were struck by freight trains in separate alcohol-related incidents. In August, another male drowned himself in a pond. On September 2, Lisa Burress, her boyfriend Joe Major, and Tommy Rizzo drove out to the Palisades cliffs for a beer party. While playing around on the rocks, Joe lost his footing and plunged two hundred feet to his death. Lisa had turned sixteen that day. After Joe died, she said she'd never have another happy birthday. Tommy Rizzo never again had a normal night's sleep.

Lisa, Cheryl, and the two Tommys frequently visited Joe's grave. The four grew closer over the bleak Jersey winter. One Friday night in March, Olton slashed his wrists. He refused treatment after being taken to a local hospital, argued with his mom that Sunday, and subsequently went to stay with the Rizzos. On Monday, Cheryl told a friend that she had physically assaulted her mother during a fight. Lisa was suspended from high school the same day. Throughout Tuesday afternoon, as they readied to go cruising with the two Tommys, the girls made an estimated thirty



Tommy Rizzo: wasted teenager.

phone calls. Cheryl told one friend she was "going to see Joe," her sister's dead boyfriend.

SUICIDE

The group spent that night rolling through Bergenfield in Olton's stereotypically dudelike '77 Camaro. At about three a.m., they pulled into an Amoco station and purchased three dollars' worth of gas. They also tried to remove a ten-foot hose from a coin-operated vacuum cleaner but were prevented by an attendant. They gave up and drove to the Foster Village apartment complex and entered garage #74, where burnouts frequently gathered to party.

Their bodies were found at around six-thirty a.m. The Camaro's engine was still running. Carbon monoxide's rapid buildup had turned the high-torqued roadster into a heavy-metal mausoleum. Olton was sitting in the driver's seat. Rizzo was in the back seat with the Burress sisters. Both males had slashed their wrists. A rambling suicide note had been scrawled on a brown paper bag in four different styles of handwriting. All four had signed it, requesting that they be buried together. A cassette cover was found near the bodies. It was AC/DC's *If You Want Blood, You've Got It.*

Over the next few weeks, amid an avalanche of national publicity, garage #74 assumed a shrinelike status. Burnouts and nerds alike dropped by to pay their respects. There were rumors that animal sacrifices, candle burnings, and other occultic ceremonies occurred outside the complex. The garage door had been nailed with graffiti which read, TEENAGE WASTELAND.

A book based on the incident, *Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead-End Kids,* was written by Donna Gaines, the woman which history will blame for introducing the Goads to each other.



Several copycat suicides and suicide attempts occurred in the Bergenfield Four's wake. On the day after the Four's pact made national news, a pair of teenaged girls in suburban Chicago carbon-monoxided themselves. One was found clutching a rose, the other a wedding album. Within hours, twenty-year-old John Staudt of Clifton, New Jersey, also killed himself with car exhaust. A week after the Four died, a young Bergenfield couple tried to duplicate the Four's suicide by letting their engine run in garage #74, but police found them before they could complete the act. Three separate teenaged males in Illinois, one in Nebraska, and a Washington-state female all died of carbon-monoxide poisoning within a week of the Four. Police found newspaper clippings relating to Bergenfield in the bedroom of Kevin Pyter, one of the dead Illinois males.

#9
William Lee Bergstrom

YOU GOTTA KNOW WHEN TO HOLD... KNOW WHEN TO FOLD 'EM... KNOW WHEN TO WALK AWAY... KNOW WHEN TO SWALLOW A HANDFUL OF SLEEPING PILLS

The fabulous Las Vegas Strip. Thousand-room motels, billowing fountains, irradiated spires, and block-square marquees. A towering galaxy of wealth. How did such Byzantine opulence sprout from the parched Nevada desert? It came a quarter at a time, from suckers like you.

No one sucked harder than William Lee Bergstrom, the self-proclaimed "Phantom High Roller." On November 16, 1984, the young Texas real-estate magnate approached the craps tables at the downtown Horseshoe Club and dropped a million smackers on the cool green felt. It was the largest single wager in Vegas history. With one unlucky roll of the dice, it was gone. He dispassionately settled his account with the casino and vanished. Less than three months later, he was found in a Vegas hotel room with a bellyful of pills. He left a suicide note which requested that he be cremated and his ashes stored in a vase with an inscription describing him as the "phantom gambler at the Horseshoe who bet a million dollars."

Bergstrom's story was typical of the insatiably greedy eighties. He used an inheritance to refurbish and sell Austin rental properties, becoming a millionaire by age twenty-eight. He then pulled out of real estate and threw his assets into the gold market, where his money swelled further. But smitten by the too-much-is-never-enough *Zeitgeist,* he began placing masochistically huge bets at Sin City gaming tables.

For a while, it worked. In 1980, he had entered the Horseshoe with two suitcases—one empty, the other filled with three-quarters of a million bucks in hundred-dollar bills. When he left, both suitcases were bulging. In the highfalutin manner of a Tom Vu, he hired a limo to putter himself around the country. He bought a house in Hawaii, toured the Orient, and began studying yoga. As late as March, 1984, he won six hundred and fifty-eight thousand greenbacks in one week.



Bergstrom: big bets because of a bone up the butt.

But unbeknownst to his family and friends, Bergstrom was a closet homosexual indulging in covert bone-smuggling sessions with a man named John. After their relationship unraveled, Bergstrom made his reckless, record-setting wager. The night he took his life, Bergstrom phoned the Horseshoe Club's manager and told him that his dissolved romance caused him to risk it all. In placing the monstrous bet, he was also gambling on whether to live: If he won, he intended to give the money to John; if he lost, he planned to cash all his chips in the casino of life. When he pissed away a million scobies, he was actually playing a high-stakes game of "He loves me.... He loves me not...."

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpt of a letter Bergstrom wrote to his family on the eve of his death):

The thing I regret most was thinking in the first place that John's leaving me was a good enough reason to do away with myself.... His leaving me was the only reason I gambled the $1 million in the first place. I knew that if I lost the million dollars that I would for sure fully [sic] and completely do away with myself.



After Mrs. John Taber's full house beat her husband's straight in a small-stakes Bronx poker game on April 1, 1928, Mr. Taber ran crashing through a closed kitchen window and down onto the sidewalk, ending his life.

#10
Anilia Bhundia
FATAL FOLLICLES OF FACIAL FUZZ

When the benign curlicues took root on Anilia Bhundia's face, it didn't matter to her that they were almost imperceptible to the naked eye. She was certain that the wispy black filaments would blossom into a Malaysian jungle, hiding her cheeks from daylight. The swarthy British girl was of Hindu extraction, and considering her tribe's hirsute tendencies, she may have already developed a hairy nimbus around her areolas and a bush in which you could hide a VCR. One could only imagine the fistfuls of Brillo which hovered above her mango chutney.



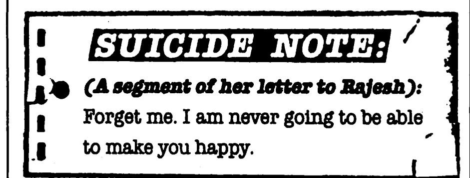
Anilia Bhundia: from this...

But the facial hair was too much. She couldn't bear to face her fiancé, Rajesh Gohil. She was unwilling to endure life known as Rajesh's little werewolf of love. Anilia was probably unaware that most suitors are horny enough to fuck a sasquatch.



...to this?

Her family offered to help, but the twenty-one-year-old girl spurned any mention of facial wax, electrolysis, Nair, or a Lady Norelco. In the summer of 1989, the hairy maiden wandered down to the banks of the Thames. On a riverside bench, she left a handbag containing notes to her parents and boyfriend. Then, instead of pulling out some tweezers and making one final attempt to be done with her whiskers, she leapt into the watery void, where there are no tears, no gnashing of teeth, no feminine sideburns.



SUICIDE NOTE:

(A segment of her letter to Rajesh):

Forget me. I am never going to be able to make you happy.



Sixteen-year-old Simon Fox killed himself in the British town of Kexborough after the Army rejected him in 1990. Their rejection was based on Fox's chronic acne problem.

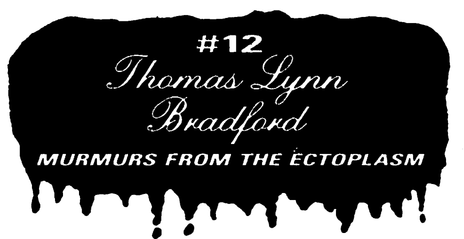


Oh là là, April in France! Crêpes dipped in *chocolat* and dusted with powdered sugar. Balloons vanishing into the robin's-egg sky. Mimes around every corner. It was 1922, and the globe's most romantic country was starting to emerge from the shock waves of World War I. The healing had begun, and the positive feeling was nearly as palpable as the fluffy meringues which lined store windows along the Champs Elysées. Poodles nipped at the heels of red-cheeked virgins. Rowing teams languidly paddled along the Seine. Cheating on their spouses, wine-besotted lovers slurped each other's genitals in golden wheat fields.

Felix Bourg, a rakish man of seventy-seven, stepped onto the streets of Tiranges, his hometown. He lit a stick of dynamite, placed it under his hat, and traipsed down the block until the explosive device blasted his head clear off his shoulders, leaving only a bony stem for budding existentialists to ponder.



Using explosive compounds found in playing-card spots which he stuffed into a bed leg and placed on a heater, William Kogut blew his head up real good in his San Quentin prison cell on October 9, 1930.



Early in this century, a religious movement known as spiritualism was as big as Barney the Dinosaur is today. It peddled the belief that we cast off our bodies after death, becoming pixies and goblins who no longer need to shit, brush our teeth, or wear after-shave. Its followers' lives were ostensibly so dull, they couldn't wait to get on with the *next* life. The movement was comprised of earnest losers who attended séances in order to kibitz with departed loved ones. Through Ouija boards, crystal balls, and post-menopausal Gypsy women, they sought to reach out and touch the dead.

T.L. Bradford was such a man, someone who abstained from sentient pleasures and pointed his antennae toward the hereafter. "When I die, my body goes to science," he once told his Detroit landlord. "It is to be sent to the Michigan Medical Institute. Anyhow, my body does not amount to much." Although an ascetic at heart, Bradford was not without a sense of humor. When the mood hit him, the forty-eight-year-old electrical engineer would amuse friends by donning a cape and doing a Dr.-Jekyll-and-Mr.-Hyde impersonation.

For the most part, though, he devoted his life to the afterlife. His small, dusty room was stuffed with spiritualist texts. He was negotiating with a book house about having his own spiritualist tome published. Then one day, realizing that words would only take him so far, he placed a personals ad in a Detroit newspaper. The ad urged anyone interested in whether the dead could talk with the living to contact Bradford.

A Detroit girl wrote him, and the two decided in subsequent meetings that their riddle could only be solved through direct action: One of them would have to die and beam back a telepathic post-mortem. Bradford volunteered, launching himself into the astral pudding with kitchen gas on the night of February 6, 1921.

His interstellar postcard never arrived. To be fair, if spirits were to alight somewhere on the earth plane, the odds are pretty good that Detroit wouldn't be high on their list.



Believing that being dead would aid her in guiding her husband's soul to heaven, a spiritualist named Maud Francher killed her two-year-old son and then swallowed a fatal dose of poison in April, 1921. The Franchers had relocated to New Jersey from Detroit, where they attended a séance in which Maud's father, himself a suicide, "spoke" from the grave.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpts from two of three letters Francher wrote in the course of killing the baby and herself):

Darling, beloved husband, I am writing you a line on this queer suicide, and I know that everyone will say, "Oh, she has lost her mind"—but I haven't by a long ways. I know just what I am doing. I want you to get married again if you wish. You know about spiritualism, and I want you to go where you can talk to me.... Just wait and see if I don't guide you right.



Charles E. Butts, a twenty-three-year-old University of Alabama freshman fascinated with the topic of life after death, shot a bullet into his chest in 1923. He apparently had entered into an agreement with a friend that was similar to Bradford's death pact.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpt):

You know we have discussed the hereafter and many other things; also, you know we have made a pact that the first one to go would come back and talk to the other, if possible.

Now I am going to hold you to this pact. I will be dead long before you see this letter. I am not crazy, as everyone will say, but I am discouraged, as life does not hold very much for me since I came back [for] Christmas.

I didn't want to come back, but the folks wanted me to. I can't kick, though, because I have had twenty-three years of wonderful living. I had been, as you know, very interested in the future and just what it holds for me. I will be branded as every other suicide—crazy. Not so. I can wait no longer to find out. We will meet again in the fourth millennium.



In 1881, after swallowing morphine and slashing his wrists, a spiritualist named Peter Gannon wrote a six-page letter as he sat down to die in New York's Central Park. He ended his note with a kiss-off that has become a part of popular culture.

SUICIDE NOTE:

...What little fear I did possess has been dissipated by the facts of spiritualism.... I almost hear men say, "What a fool to die." How do you know, you little atoms, groveling in the sand for jewels, groping in the darkness for the essence of light, searching in the haystack of selfishness and dissipation for the needle, happiness?... There is something fascinating in the idea of dashing headlong, in the full vigor of youth and mental power, across that gloomy, mysterious boundary—the valley of the shadow of death, with the charming uncertainty whether one shall find a paradise, beautiful and happy beyond human conception, or a desolate, howling wilderness of nothing.... Well, bye-bye old world, I believe I have [had] enough of you!

#13
M. Jay Briggs
IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

There was little that was exceptional about the fact that M. Jay Briggs fastened a rope around his neck and hanged himself near his Connecticut farmhouse in October, 1901. The astonishing thing was that he was at least the twenty-first member of a family which for over fifty years had been methodically ending their own lives. His family tree was subject to overzealous self-pruning, and M. Jay had been one of the few remaining twigs, another notch in a withered stump of Briggslessness.

No one could explain the ancestral *Weltschmerz,* the genealogical death wish, but his patriarchs' genes seemed bit-mapped for self-extinction. One by one, they succumbed to the genocidal impulse like gnats splatting against a windshield. Briggs's sister shot herself. Another of his sisters dove into a pond and drowned. His older brother had hanged himself in a barn ten years previously. More than one woman who had married into the dour gene pool gave in to the mopey malaise and also offed themselves. The suicidal drive tends to run along family lines, but it has seldom been matched by the Briggs clan's prodigious output. They were a family which multiplied only in order to subtract.



Manhattan medical student Robert J. White shot himself to death in August, 1907, using the same pearl-handled revolver his father and grandfather had used to kill themselves.

#14
Buddhist Monks in Vietnam
EIGHTFOLD PATH TO LIGHTER FLUID

For sheer combustive pageantry, few suicides come close to the public self-immolations committed by a string of pacifistic human charcoal briquets in South Vietnam during the mid-sixties. If nothing else, the deaths of these yellow-robed baldies are admirable for the taut willpower necessary to incinerate oneself to the bone, to sit in an unruffled lotus position as flames curl around one's limbs.

The suicides came in two waves, first in '63 and again in '66, with at least nine monks and nuns dying each year. The first wave was in protest of the massacre of nine Buddhists by South Vietnamese government forces in the city of Hue. The government was at that time controlled by a small faction of Roman Catholics led by Ngo Dinh Diem, and the lurid displays of self-directed pyromania successfully led to



Diem's ouster. The second wave was intended to bring the downfall of a subsequent government helmed by Nguyen Cao Ky, whom many Buddhists considered to be a hatchet man for the Americans. Ky later moved to Orange County, California, and the reader is free to decide whether that was sufficient punishment for his crimes.

The self-cremations were notable for their flagrant exhibitionism. Instead of torching themselves within cloistered monasteries, the sizzling celibates chose busy intersections, marketplaces, public squares, cathedrals, a university, and the government palace in Saigon. They'd appear out of nowhere, popping out of cars or jumping off bicycles, douse themselves with gasoline, sit with their legs folded, and strike a match. As the flames rose upward of twenty feet, sympathetic crowds gathered to egg the holy men on toward nirvana. While blood boiled, brains baked, and steaming guts burst open, cheering spectators formed rings around the martyrs to prevent fire crews from rescuing them. After the monks had been reduced to ash, firemen were finally allowed to scoop up the molten mendicants.

When depictions of the blazing street theater hit the TV news back in the States, it must have been an eye-popping spectacle for your average Ma and Pa Kettle, most of whom couldn't handle a sunburn. Out-gunned and out-funded, the Vietnamese won the war for one simple reason: They were bigger psychos than we were.



How did Dan Burros hate the Jews? Let me count the ways: He hated them in his letters, which he always signed "*Judah Verrecke*" ("Perish Judah"); he hated them in his conversations, which inevitably came around to his contention that "the Jews must suffer and suffer"; he hated them in his notebooks, which were filled with drawings of gas chambers and Jewish corpses; he hated them in his inventions, one of which was designed to electrocute Jews with piano wires when a person tickled the ivories; he hated them in his karate lessons, which he studied so he would be able to kill Jews with his bare hands; and he hated them in a bar of soap which he always carried with him, a bar which bore the label, "From the finest Jewish fat." Every vessel in his brain seemed part of a larger blueprint for Hebraic extinction. His stubby little heart was a vial of hatred for *das Juden.* He had an unrelenting odium for all things kosher. There was no doubt about it: Dan Burros hated Jews. Only one problem—Dan Burros was Jewish.

For some inexplicable reason, he fancied himself a foot soldier in the war against Zionism. He liked the crisp feel of starched khakis, the strong odor of boot polish, the bristly abrasiveness of close-cropped hair, the sting of cold cologne on razor burn, the pinkish glow left by a rough soaping and piping-hot shower, the milky glint of clean fingernails, the tight pinch of snow-white underwear, the pert arrogance of erect male nipples—I think you get the idea.

His Nazi fervor was awakened in the fifth grade, when he began collecting German war souvenirs and brawling with students who disagreed with his right-wing viewpoints, reflexively stigmatizing his foes as "Jew bastards." He later became a member of the National Guard and was assigned in the late fifties to help integrate Southern schools. During his tenure in the Guard, he became disgusted at the sight of white girls being "pushed by soldiers with bayonets." He later spent two-and-a-half years in the Army, where his less-militant colleagues called him "Brown-nose Burros" and "Der Führer." He thrice attempted suicide while in the Army and thrice failed, at one point jotting a note where he lamented, "I had hoped to see the revival of National Socialism. I see now our cause is hopeless." He received an honorable discharge "...by reasons of unsuitability, character, and behavior disorder."

Burros became a printer, sketching Nazi figures during lunch breaks and telling people his parents were German. He started networking by mail with other Nazis, signing some of his letters "Hans Friedrich Borchers," the name of a German spy from the 1930s. He soon shacked up in the barracks of George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party, helping print Herr Rockwell's literature and in his spare time playing with a dog affectionately called Gas Chamber. But feeling stifled in his subservient role to Rockwell, Burros left the party in November, 1961, and headed for New York. He became editor of a magazine called *Kill!*, whose masthead declared it to be "...dedicated to the annihilation of the enemies of the white people." The first issue's lead article was "The Importance of Killing." Around this time he formed his own political organization, the American National Party, and briefly worked on another magazine, *The International Nazi Fascist.* He sometimes ranted on street corners and could be seen around town sporting a *Lee Harvey Oswald Fan Club* button.

In 1963, he was arrested on firearms charges for his involvement in the Bronx's White Tower Riots, where Burros and some friends tried to disrupt a civil-rights demonstration. He served only ten days, but after his release he grew disillusioned with overtly Nazified political groups. Instead, he found himself drawn to the Ku Klux Klan. When he attended a Delaware Klan rally in 1965, he felt as if he had come home. He rapidly ascended the Klan's ranks, receiving an honorary scarlet gown as New York's Grand Dragon and a card signifying him as New York's King Kleagle, the state's chief organizer. As

Suicide



part of his duties, he screened applicants to make sure they weren't Jewish. He fell in love with a fellow white supremacist named Carol, and when he was especially cheerful, he'd let her wear his Klan robe. At twenty-eight, Dan was one happy racist.

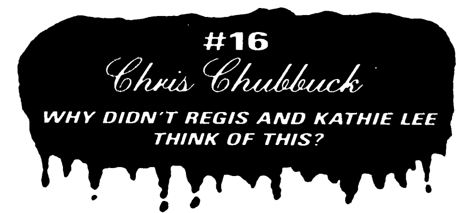
On October 19, 1965, the *New York Times* listed Burros as a Klansman, a revelation which cost him his job but gave him an added sheen in the racist underworld. Ten days later, a *Times* reporter made an appointment to meet Burros in a Queens luncheonette. Dan seemed honored by all the attention until the reporter, who would later paint Burros as "a round, short, sallow man who looked like a small heap of misery," confronted him with an intriguing tidbit: Burros's parents were Jewish, and Dan himself had been bar-mitzvahed. Burros threatened to throw acid at the scribe and warned, "I'll have to retaliate, do you understand? If you publish that, I'll come and get you and I'll kill you. I don't care what happens. I'll be ruined. This is all I've got to live for." As they exited the luncheonette, the born-again reporter urged Burros to find Christ.

Dan fled to the Reading, Pennsylvania, home of Roy Frankhouser, a fellow Klansman. "I'm ruined," he shrieked to Frankhouser, "I'm finished. I've got to end it all. I'm going to go down and blow up the House Committee. I'm going to blow up the *New York Times.*" He also threatened to kill President Johnson. Burros refused to tell Frankhouser exactly what the *Times* was going to print.

When the paper made no mention of Burros on Saturday, Dan was elated. He even slipped into his red robe for a while. Foot-odor jokes about a fellow Klansman kept the Frankhouser house mirthful that night.

The *Times* dropped the bomb on Sunday instead. Burros returned from the newsstand in a full sweat and ran up to Frankhouser's bedroom. Burros's repeated karate kicks failed to open Roy's gun closet, but it didn't matter—he spotted a .32-caliber revolver sitting on a dresser and grabbed it. "Roy, long live the white race. God bless you," Burros said as he walked into a living room while a Wagner record played in the background. "Long live the white race. I've got nothing more to live for," Burros said, and then shot himself in the chest. The bullet failed to kill him. "Man, I missed," said an exasperated

Burros before sending a bullet into his right temple. He fell down dead, and a circle of blood spread out around his skull. It was Halloween. Dan Burros would never wear another costume.



Morning TV talk shows are usually a lackluster hodgepodge of show-biz gossip, regional fudge-baking competitions, and light aerobics for the lard-assed audience matrons. They act as video Valiums for frumpy housewives on a hegira between dropping the kids off at school and picking them up again. So when Chris Chubbuck, hostess of Sarasota, Florida's *Suncoast Digest,* shot her brains out on live TV, a hundred thousand half-eaten Pop Tarts probably fell into a hundred thousand shag carpets at once. It must have shocked the colonic polyps out of her curler-wearing contingent.



It was July 15, 1974, and Chubbuck, thirty, was struggling through the first day of the show's revised format, one which required her to read news before interviewing celebrities. She was reading a story about a gunfight in a bar when producers ran into technical difficulties with a film clip. When Chubbuck's face reappeared on screen, she recited these words: "In keeping with Channel 40's policy of bringing you the latest in blood and guts, and in living color, you are going to see another first—attempted suicide." She then pulled out a .38-caliber revolver from a shopping bag and fired into her head. Cameras went black. In a few minutes, the station was airing an old movie.

This was a harmonic convergence of news happening and being reported within the same act. It was live television reaching its fullest potential—dead television. Unlike the cowardly Dave Garroway, who romped with a chimp on NBC's *Today* show but shot himself to death in private, Chubbuck showed the instincts of a real trouper. And yet the world spins on its crooked axis, bereft of a true talent while Joan Lunden and Bryant Gumbel prattle about gift ideas for Mother's Day.



Perched atop a hundred-foot flagpole one bright day in May, 1975, William Corcoran knew he had made the right decision in choosing to end his life. No one seemed to care. He had his fill of emotional bruises, mild betrayals, the whole nattering jangle of human existence. Life was a bitter lime to suck.

But as he stared down at the unforgiving earth of Palmyra, New York, pondering how it would feel to shatter into a thousand pieces à la Humpty Dumpty, his life instinct arose like a swarm of bats fleeing a cave. Maybe the crowd which formed at the pole's base knew what it felt like to be lonely. And the fireman who was coming to save him seemed like a decent enough guy. Perhaps *he* could be a buddy, a shoulder to cry on, someone with whom to share a round of Michelobs and a handful of beer nuts. Yeah, this new feeling which blew through his soul felt pretty danged good. He would make a pact with God, agreeing to appreciate the twinkle in a child's eye, the soft curl of a woman's smile, the beneficent nod of an old man feeding pigeons.

But God would have none of it. As Corcoran was being rescued, he accidentally slipped and plummeted earthward, his indecisive frame smacking into the ground like a giant egg.

#18

Inocencia Rosa Cortes

ALRIGHT, MAYBE HE OVERREACTED

A cobbler's life is not as glamorous as one might think. Sure, we've all dreamed of repairing shoes for a living, but with the high prestige and dynamite salary comes a wearisome spiritual toll. One must endure an endless parade of corns, bunions, ingrown toenails, the ceaseless dye jobs, the stubborn scuff marks, the smell of unwashed feet, and the blunt come-ons of foot fetishists. And don't even *mention* galoshes. Lesser beings go into banking, law, or medicine.

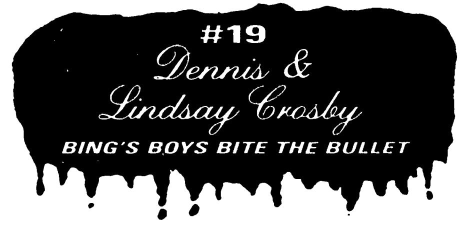
It's common knowledge that it's easier to rehabilitate a child molester than to fix a pair of badly worn shoes. So when a client entered Inocencia Rosa Cortes's Mexico City shoe-repair shop toting a pair of weather-beaten clodhoppers in September, 1947, Cortes did what any self-respecting shoemaker would do—he let out a uvula-wobbling wail, seized an awl, and plunged the small, pointed tool into his chest ten times.



"You villain! You will certainly die with your shoes on!" screamed a London cobbler to his young apprentice during an argument in September, 1786. The berated boy was found to have hanged himself the next morning. Except for his bare feet, he was fully clothed.



Other incidents of suicidal overreactions: Unable to decipher a complicated income-tax form, a Frenchman hanged himself in 1947 after saying, "I'd rather die than go through another day of this"; claiming to be depressed over the popularity of modern jazz, Roy Baker of Venice, California, took the gas route in 1921; Patrick Lynch, twenty-eight, ended it all in 1985 upon discovering that a termite had caused two hundred dollars' worth of damage in the London flat he had just rented; and Harvard freshman Barton Fay flipped the "OFF" switch in 1922, nauseated with the rampant use of eggs in campus-restaurant menus.



To a gullible world, Bing Crosby was a plaid-wearing, pipe-toking Everydad, a Norman Rockwell painting incarnate, an orange-juice-sipping smoothie whose dulcet tones massaged your innards like aural Ex-Lax. The National Father's Day Committee elected him "Hollywood's Most Typical Father of 1937," and *LIFE* magazine said he was "incontestably the No. 1 Big Family Man of Hollywood." Der Bingle emanated such snug-as-a-bug paternalism, he made everyone wish they had issued from his urethra.

In reality, the mush-mouthed crooner was a savage cocksucker whose heart was a dark cavern of icy stalactites. He may have given the world a "White Christmas," but his four sons by his first marriage suffered *Kristallnacht.* If they didn't put away their underwear, they were forced to wear it around their neck until they went to bed. If they couldn't master dance steps or sing a tune to Bing's satisfaction, he mercilessly insulted them in front of his celebrity friends. If they committed some particularly



Dennis "Ugly" Crosby.

grievous infraction, they were forced to endure the stony ministrations of pappy's metal-studded belt, which reddened their behinds until the first drop of blood appeared. Bing was indeed the Loch Ness father.

"We lived like four kids in a goddamned prison cell," Gary, the oldest of four Crosby brothers, once griped. In the late fifties, Gary teamed with brothers Phillip, Lindsay, and Dennis for an ill-fated nightclub act. The cowering quartet haplessly twittered and two-stepped their way into show-biz nothingness, falling into a mud pit of broken marriages and alcoholic debauchery. They sacked the act in 1959 after a fraternal free-for-all in a Montreal dressing room. Gary, whom Bing endearingly referred to as "Bucket Butt" and "Satchel Ass," got at least partial revenge against his despotic daddy by publishing the bitchy opus *Going My Own Way* in 1983.

Lindsay, whose oversized *tête* led Bing to call him "The Head," went on to star in low-budget celluloid stinkers such as *Free Grass* and *Bigfoot*. He was arrested numerous times for drunk driving and in 1982 suffered a nervous breakdown. Colorado sheriff's deputies busted him in '87 for sprinting naked around a motel swimming pool. In December, 1989, eleven days after being informed that his inheritance was depleted, the Crosby boy who was reportedly Bing's favorite put a bullet through The Head.



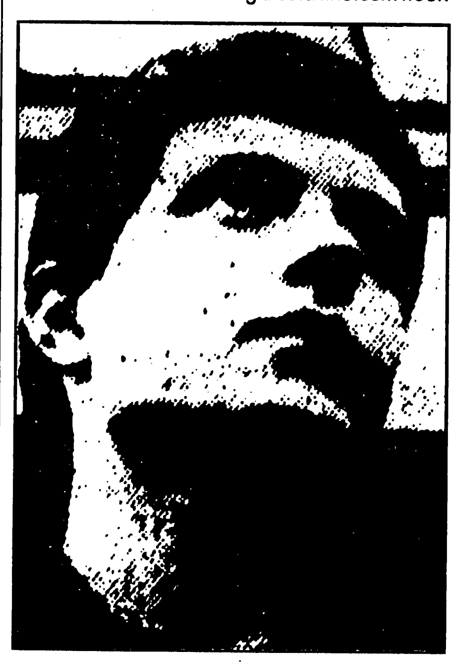
Lindsay "The Head" Crosby.

"I was happy to be who I was, even if I had the hell kicked out of me," Dennis Crosby, a k a "Ugly" and "Stupid," was once quoted as saying. Awash in booze problems, failed business ventures, two soured marriages, and five kids, Dennis erased that ugly puss with a twelve-gauge shotgun only seventeen months after Lindsay killed himself.

The double tragedy could have been prevented. The boys could have put their underwear away, sang on-key, and gotten those dance steps right, but *noooooo....*



The British group Joy Division, named after Nazi concentration-camp bordellos, were as colorful as a cement wall and half as rousing as a chest cold. Their sound was massively depressing: Guitars slashed like razors over Novocain bass lines, and drums smacked like a hundred Thorazines hitting a cold linoleum floor.



Over this dismal dirge-o-rama rose the sad little voice of Ian Curtis, who always sounded as if he was gargling from a phlegm-filled Dixie cup. His dispirited intonation made him sound twice his age of twenty-two, his lyrics a Binaca blast of numbed emotions: "I don't care anymore/I've lost the will to want more.... It's creeping up slowly/That last fatal hour." While the other band members boozed it up and dug into their fish 'n' chips, Ian would sit all alone, crying. Although he made it comically obvious how depressed he was, he never really let us in on what ultimate bum-out had destroyed him. Was it tummy trouble? Lithium deprivation? A flaccid pee-pee? Perhaps he might have been more sanguine had he been getting a little tookie on the side.

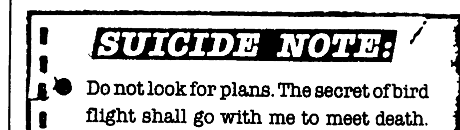
Rumored to be the odd man out in a love triangle, the whiny pipsqueak hanged himself in his British home on May 18, 1980, only hours before Joy Division was scheduled to embark on their first US tour. Throughout the eighties, J.D.'s two albums inspired countless over-moussed neo-Goths to form their own bands. Certain misguided souls have come to view Curtis as a god, an elegiac martyr. Regrettably, most of them have failed to pursue their emulation to its logical extreme and hang themselves.



A frustrated Austrian inventor, Czerny ended his frustration with an invention that ended his life. Sixty years before Jack Kevorkian, he perfected a suicide machine and successfully tested it on himself.

Prior to effecting his own demise, Czerny had spent two harebrained decades developing a "Flying Flapper"—a motorized scooter rigged to birdlike wings which would place the miracle of flight within the average nudnik's hands. Czerny envisioned a New Age of human pterodactyls fluttering across the sky. He published *Der Schwingenflieger*, a monthly newsletter which served as the house organ of his "flap-flying club." Despite his enterprise's seeming improbability, he was said to have fashioned a prototype which actually worked. Several Austrian journals commended his efforts, but he failed to scrape together enough schillings to mass-market the device. "The fate of Austrian inventors," wrote the embittered father of flap-flying in July, 1929, "is the fate of typical Austrian stupidity—imposing monuments after neglect has brought them to the grave."

Five months after penning those words, Czerny burned the blueprints to his Flying Flapper and then finished work on his final invention. He fastened a string to a cork in his bedroom's gas piping. The string led to an alarm clock in which he had silenced the bell device. He tied the string to the revolving alarm mechanism, set the timer, and bade himself good night. At the appointed time, the clock quietly wound up the string, which pulled off the cork and filled the room with lethal fumes. Czerny died painlessly while he slept, flapping his way to the great aviary in the stars.





Using a device nearly identical to Czerny's, Wilfred Jeffrey of Wolverhampton, England, alarm-gassed himself in 1967.



The hands of a Seattle engineer wrought an even more complex self-termination device in 1986, one which helped him commit "solarcide." He placed a photoelectric cell in his motel-room window, connecting it to a wire fastened to heating elements on his chest. When the sun rose over the Emerald City, its energy was transferred to the heating elements, which lit a firecracker. The firecracker triggered a gun, which fired a bullet into the clever man's breast.



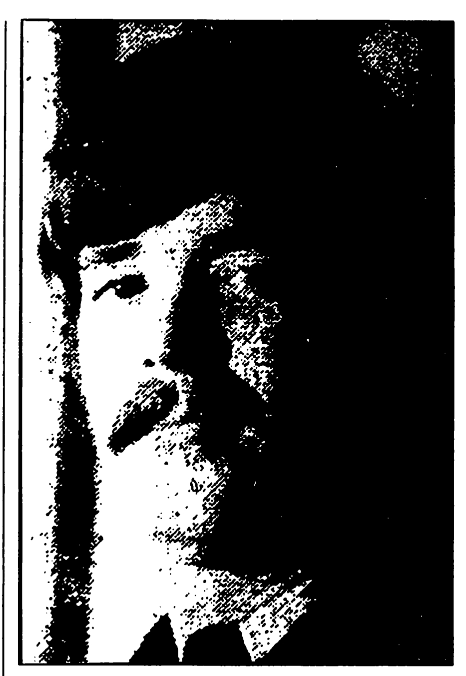
Jeff Davis was the sort of guy about whom Oliver Stone makes movies. A tormented Vietnam vet, he never forgot the night that Charlie Cong nearly wiped out his entire company, nor the next morning, when he surveyed his friends' bullet-strafed bodies floating in rice paddies. Neither could he shake his guilt over having killed an unarmed Vietnamese kid who he thought was carrying a bomb.

He returned to the States with a leg half-gimpy from shrapnel wounds and a chronic case of heebie-jeebies. When cars backfired, he dove for cover. Certain that they concealed snipers, he avoided hedges. Every night before sleeping, he barricaded his bedroom door with a chair. The choppers kept buzzing in his head.

Jeff spoke of nothing but Nam, Nam, Nam. He watched every episode of a PBS series on the war and sat through multiple screenings of *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now.* His favorite tape was Billy Joel's *Goodnight Saigon.* When people asked him what he did during the war, his stock answer was, "I killed communists for Christ."

He could have spun pottery or whittled bird cages, but he instead chose to lead the martial existence of a D.C. cop, a veritable Travis Bickle who called himself a "garbage collector." Having placed his nuts on the line in Southeast Asia, he found himself weathering the taunts of anti-war protestors. The final insult came in 1984, when he visited his hometown of Port Arthur, Texas, only to find it transformed into a ghetto for Vietnamese immigrants. "I'm tired and I'm scared," he told his mother while pacing the floor. "Sometimes I get so down, I think I'm flipping my lid."

Two nights after flying back to D.C., he drove to the Vietnam Memorial, that evil black slab which bears the names of more than fifty-eight thousand dead soldiers. The names of the roughly one hundred and sixty men slain in Davis's company were up there among them. Drowning in Jim Beam, he sat down at a table and began sobbing. A fellow vet walked up and hugged him. "Welcome home, brother," he said. "Do you want to talk?" When Davis



ignored him, the spurned grunt walked away. Jeff then ambled over to an oak tree. Leaning back against the tree and facing the Memorial, he pulled out his service revolver. Then, amid the nocturnal mist, a thick blackness stretching back to that endless night in the rice paddies, he joined the rest of his company.



Claiming in a 1986 letter sent to congressmen that "veterans are a forgotten group," Vietnam vet Michael Dean dosed his girlfriend and her three children with sleeping pills, sprinkled kerosene throughout his New Hampshire house, set it afire, and shot his loved ones before shooting himself.



Seized by a flashback, former Green Beret Stanley Erwin Moody covered himself in blackface, put on combat gear, grabbed four guns, and staged a last stand in Florida's Ocala National Forest in 1982. He wounded a curious interloper, who he evidently thought was an attacking Cong soldier, and then committed suicide rather than be taken alive.



Dough-mi-neeka-neeka-neeka! The thrushlike tones were unavoidable in 1963, reverberating worldwide in a jubilant canticle to St. Dominic. The ethereal French lyrics seemingly floated from every turntable and radio speaker in existence, topping the US charts and moving a million-and-a-half units. Once heard, the eminently hummable chorus latched onto the head like a million-and-a-half leeches. It was *Dough-mi-neeka-neek*-annoying.

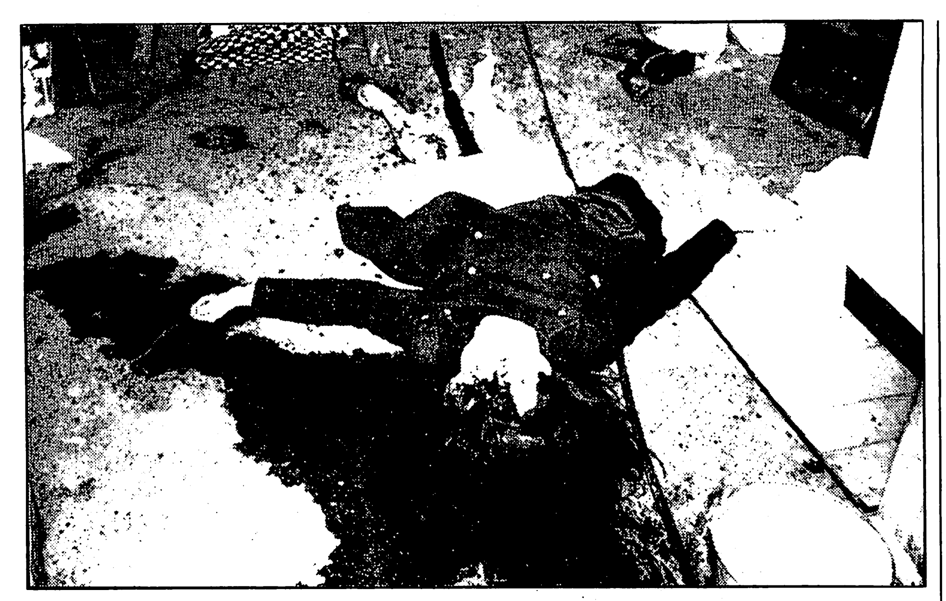
The woman behind the voice was Sister Luc-Gabrielle, a Dominican nun tucked away in a Belgian convent. She was also known as *Soeur Sourire* ("Sister Smile") in recognition of a sweet grin which brightened a face that otherwise would have caused paint to flake. The sex-starved guitar-picker was unaware that she was a pop star until 1966, when Debbie Reynolds portrayed her in *The Singing Nun,* a biopic which Sister Smile would label "absolutely idiotic." But the taste of fame had rattled the nun's faith and, finding the lure of leisure suits and mutual cunnilingus too strong, she left the convent that same year.

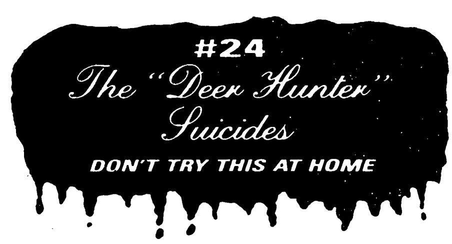
Sister Smile went back to calling herself Jeanine Deckers, the name she had been born with. But her celebrity soon went the way of her habit and penguin outfit. The Belgian government didn't care that she had donated all her record proceeds to charity. They nailed the ex-nun for a hundred and twenty thousand bucks in back taxes. Twenty years after *Dominique* first hit, the dykey songstress waxed an electro-boogie version of the tune, but it was met with screaming indifference. She was relegated to giving guitar lessons and playing in churches for free. "Life is a struggle," she told an acquaintance, "and I struggle."



In '83, she and her "companion" (heh, heh), a physical therapist named Anne Pecher, opened a center for autistic tots. Pecher, who looked like Mickey Dolenz, was also a fallen nun. The oyster-gobbling duo were unable to find financial backing for their charitable endeavor and soon backed out of it. In 1985, the squid-sucking friends were found dead in their apartment outside of Brussels, felled by gutfuls of downers and booze. *Dough-mi-neeka-neeka*-nothing.

SUICIDE NOTE:
(Excerpt):
We hope God will welcome us. He saw us suffer.





This case calls to mind the question that mothers have asked their bratty offspring for years: "If Johnny Johnson shot himself in the head, would you do it, too?" As far as it concerned at least twenty-eight shit-brained simps, the answer was, "Yeah, Ma, 'cause it looked so awesome on TV!"

It centers around video and syndicated-television screenings of *The Deer Hunter*, a Vietnam epic starring Christopher Walken and Robert DeNiro as American servicemen. In the film's most memorable scene, Chris and Bob are forced to play Russian roulette for the amusement of Viet Cong soldiers. They emerge unscathed, but DeNiro later bumps into a heroin-zonked Walken in a Saigon gambling parlor. Instead of playing blackjack or an honest game of pinochle, Walken spins a revolver, points it to his head, and sprays grey matter all over the walls.

For a string of dunderheaded couch potatoes in the early eighties, this seemed an irresistibly romantic gesture. In November, 1981, two nights after viewing the film, a suburban Chicago tool-and-die maker named Ted Tolwinski came home drunk. He awoke his wife and led her into the kitchen, where they sat at a Formica table. Showing her a friend's revolver, he spun the cylinder as if it were the Wheel of Fortune and held the gun to his head. Click. He gave it another whirl. Click. Ted's wife tried to grab the gun, but he told her it was safe. One more spin. BOOM!

Two weeks after watching a 1980 cable broadcast of *The Deer Hunter* in Trenton, New Jersey, thirteen-year-old Freddy Saganowski placed a bullet in his dad's .38-caliber revolver and, without even bothering to spin the chamber, gave himself a lead injection.

Illinois plumber David Radnis had a spat with his wife two nights after viewing the film. He got soused, invited some friends over, and blasted himself while his house guests watched.

The Deer Hunter was one of the first tapes to find its way into Illinois factory worker Brian Jackson's VCR. An Army vet, Jackson told his brother on a January morning in 1981 how he and his grunt buddies used to play Russian roulette in Germany. Waxing nostalgic, he fetched a hollowpoint bullet, fed it into his Colt .357 Magnum revolver, and spirited himself away to a celestial boot camp.

What mindless obeisance to the cathode-ray tube these four humans (and an estimated twenty-four others) displayed! Their stiff corpses serve as repugnant examples of those who can only live by imitation. After all, it was only a movie. And they were only stupid.



An unexceptional worker ant, a dutiful wage slave who neither pissed nor moaned about his spine-wrenching duties, Giuseppe Dolce blended into his workplace like beige carpet in an office building. He was a model laborer who punched in, did his job, bothered no one, and punched out. A young stonecutter from a northern Italian village, Dolce found employment with a French road crew during World War II. His bosses were thrilled at the dedication with which he hauled rocks, spread tar, and mended blown-out roads along the Riviera.

His co-workers tolerated the husky, olive-skinned prole well enough, but he struck them as a bit unreachable. He lived alone in a tottery mobile home which he drove from one job site to the next. He had no family to speak of, no seeming need for male companionship, no obvious lust for women, no apparent vices. When the boys went out to eat or drink, Giuseppe stayed in his little wigwam. He seemed devoid of interests.

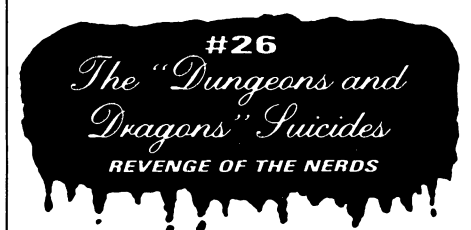
That all changed in 1944, when he was assigned to drive the company's steamroller. His Latin libido instantly straddled onto the machine's cruel destructiveness. He fell head-over-heels for its steady, inflexible power, its insuperable brawn, the way it crept along like a giant conquering snail. It seemed like the only thing that busted his nuts was sitting in the vehicle's vibrating chair, *popping the clutch*, and letting his war machine roll. He would sometimes dismount and watch it forge slowly on, staring agog as it trampled everything underfoot. When each work day ended, Giuseppe would park the steamroller outside his mobile home, where he'd polish it with the same care that a mother powders and diapers her baby. "He always seemed alone when he was with us," a co-worker would say, "alone with his steamroller."

The infatuation lasted three years. One afternoon late in 1947, a member of the road crew noticed that Giuseppe was idly gazing at his beloved steel behemoth. "Well, Giuseppe," he asked, "what are you doing there?"

"Nothing," came the distant response. "Just thinking. Wondering what would happen if nobody could stop this thing. This one and all the others, just rolling on forever." The worker shrugged and walked away. He was fifty yards down the road when he noticed the unmanned steamroller crawling up behind him. Its rollers, normally white, were coated with wide red slicks. "Come quick, Papa!" a girl was screaming. "Monsieur bleeds!" The worker ran back to find Dolce as flat as a pizza crust. Giuseppe had evidently prostrated himself on the road and surrendered to that slow, inviolable wheel. After a prolonged courtship, he had finally consummated his love.



George Perks, an ironworker from Birmingham, England, was hypnotized as he watched a steamroller come toward him one night in 1877. Proclaiming, "Where that goes, I will follow," he flung himself in its path and let the love roll all over him.



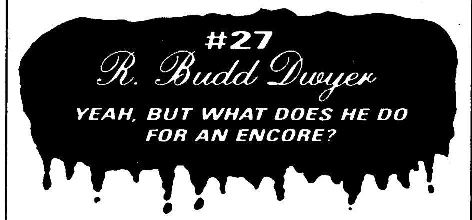
Ten years ago, the major geek craze was a



Tolkienesque fantasy game known among the faithful as "D&D." Pale, acne-scarred, four-eyed, bow-tied, Mensa/Trekkie types couldn't get enough of it, for when they huddled their atrophied frames around a table and began to play, they assumed the form of wizards, Huns, swashbucklers, thunder gods, warlocks, and Herculean giant-killers. For socially hopeless ectomorphs, it provided a potent escape from the dead hum of computers, calculators, and fluorescent lights, the bloodless stacks of books and dot-matrix printouts.

The only hitch was that Dungeons and Dragons is a game of chance, and one's character sometimes *dies.* To go from mega-wimp to Conan the Barbarian and back to a ninety-pound wet noodle within a few rolls of the dice can be too much for a fragile egghead to handle. The National Coalition on Television Violence linked fifty-one suicides to the game from 1979 to 1985. Among those alleged to be D&D-related was the 1979 disappearance and suicide of James Dallas Egbert III, a sixteen-year-old Michigan State University super-brain who reportedly wandered off in a funk due to dashed D&D fortunes. In 1982, sixteen-year-old Virginia whiz kid Irving Lee "Bink" Pulling II shot himself in the heart after another player had placed a curse on him. Pulling had scrawled "LIFE IS A JOKE" on a school blackboard shortly before his suicide. Bink's mom went on to form an organization called B.A.D.D. (Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons). The mother of Michael Dempsey, fifteen, was puzzled when her son placed a hex on her during a simple game of backgammon. She blamed his subsequent suicide on D&D dependency.

The religious right was soon blaming Dungeons and Dragons on an international Satanic conspiracy, charging that its medieval hobgoblin imagery was thinly veiled devil worship. "It is another of Satan's ploys to pollute and destroy our children's minds," squalled a parent in Connecticut, where D&D devotee Roland Cartier had hanged himself. "I can feel the devil right here in the media center," shivered a woman in Heber City, Utah, a town which later voted to ban D&D in its schools. B.A.D.D. founder Pat Pulling excoriated a game manual which featured "detailed descriptions of killing, Satanic human sacrifice, assassination, sadism, premeditated murder, and curses of insanity." A concerned physician warned that "there is hardly a game in which the players do not indulge in murder, arson, torture, rape, or highway robbery." The Christian Information Council likewise inveighed against the game, threatening that it can "desensitize players to murder, suicide, rape, torture, robbery, the occult, or any other immoral or illegal act." I realize that their hearts are probably in the right place, but do they have to make the fucking thing sound like so much *fun*?



#27 R. Budd Dwyer

YEAH, BUT WHAT DOES HE DO FOR AN ENCORE?

Most people go gently into that good night, ignominiously withering away in their sleep or stuffed with tubes in a hospital bed. They end their lives with the same thudding mediocrity that they lived them.

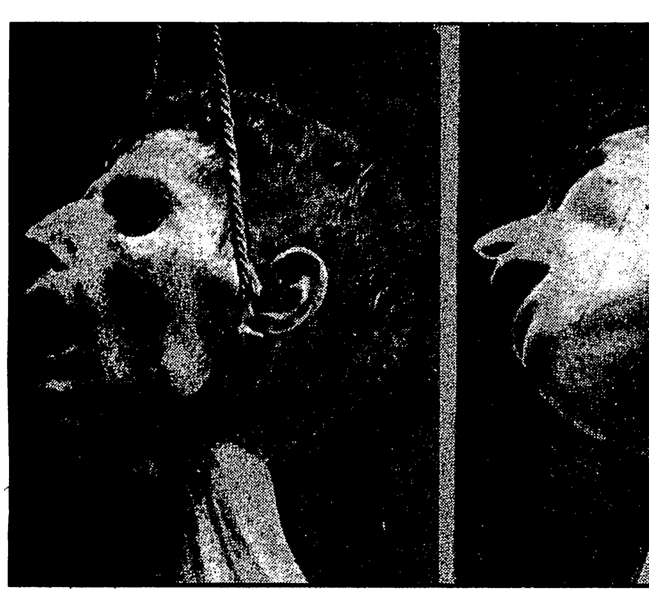
Not Budd Dwyer, the king of public-relations suicides. You only *wish* you could die as gloriously as he did. A politician by trade, he couldn't deny his vocation's innate exhibitionist tendencies. On January 22, 1987, a day before he was to be sentenced for a bribery conviction, the cholesterol-stoked Pennsylvania State Treasurer summoned a press conference. He then blasted his dome while the TV cameras rolled, ensuring that his death would be enjoyed by generations to come. What chrome-plated balls. Hail Budd Dwyer!

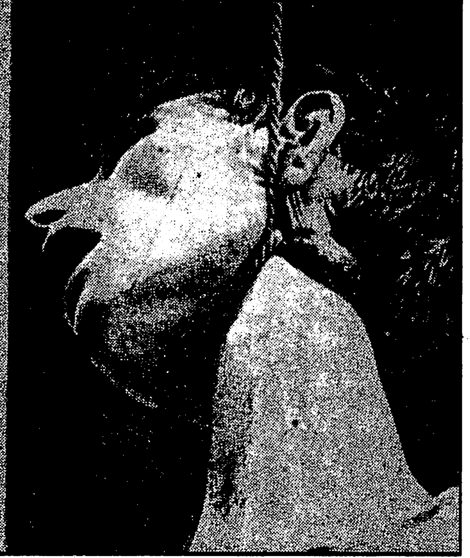
His stunning curtain call started when a jury found him guilty of awarding a $4.6-million contract to a California computer firm in exchange for a three-hundred-thousand-dollar kickback. Although the deal never went through, Dwyer faced a possible fifty-five-year sentence. Maintaining his innocence, Dwyer delivered thirty minutes of aimless declamations in front of news reporters, claiming that friends had likened him to a "modern-day Job" and that his imprisonment would be "an American gulag." He was as white as Casper the Friendly Ghost after soliloquizing, his beige skull soaked in sweat under the hot lights.

After handing out some sealed letters to his aides, he reached into a manila envelope and pulled out a blued-steel .357 Magnum revolver. "Please leave the room if this will affect you," he calmly exclaimed amid cries of "Budd! Don't do this! . . . Budd, listen to me!" Before anyone could wrest the gun away from him, he shoved the barrel in his mouth and tripped the hammer, knocking himself back against the Pennsylvania state flag and onto the floor. The blood streamed from his nose like water from a faucet.

The video cameras, of course, zoomed in on his plasma-smeared face. Horrified yelps of "Oh, my God!" and "Holy *shit*!" spiraled above the sound of clicking shutters. "Don't panic," beseeched an oily middle-aged man, holding out his palms and stepping in front of Budd's bulk. "Don't panic. Someone call the ambulance and a doctor and the police. Don't panic, please. Show a little decorum, please. Dear God in heaven. Alright, you've got your footage. Would you kindly wrap up your footage, get your cameras out—please get out of the room. You've got everything that can be gotten at this point. Please. Paul, please. Paul, *please*! Please, wrap up your cameras and get out of the room. Oh, my God in heaven. Dear God in heaven. Please, Paul, *please*! That's enough! That's enough! *Please* leave the room now!" Cameramen *finally* turned off their videocams and virtually flew back to their TV stations with the gruesome images. Dwyer's suicide was replayed nationally, with most broadcasters having the "decorum" to stop the tape after Budd whipped out his gun. But Philadelphia's WPVI-TV and WPXI-TV in Pittsburgh were bold enough to let the video wind down to its crimson conclusion. A television commentator would later call Dwyer's final act the "Super Bowl of suicides."

Tasteless or not, it was undeniably a dazzling gesture, much more sweeping than anything Dwyer could have done as the Keystone State's chief bean counter. Rather than rot away in the pen with fifty dicks up his ass, he went out blazing, theatrically, on *his* terms. We love you, Budd Dwyer. We honestly love you.







HONORABLE MENTION

In 1878, a man named George W. Burleigh handed out flyers advertising that he would culminate his lecture at Chicago's Thornton Hall by shooting himself. Naturally, he packed the auditorium to the rafters. After an impressive oratory, he pulled out a large-caliber derringer and tore his head open with one shot. The crowd undoubtedly left feeling that their one-dollar admission price had been worth every penny.


SAY GOOD NIGHT, BUDD....

#28
Sergei Esenin
HE RAN OUT OF INK

Poetry is useless, and poets even more so. They display a sickening level of self-immersion, a maudlin self-loathing unconsciously spurred by their inability to throw together a decent sentence. They are praised for being ineffectual, lauded for their inability to survive. If someone walked up to me and began tittering in iambic pentameter, I'd thrash them until they pissed blood.

I suppose it's a tolerable vocation for females, but for a man to wax rhapsodic about Grecian urns and waterlilies bespeaks a set of cherry-sized testicles. Sergei Esenin was that type of guy, a self-appointed tragic figure who believed that being a writer gave him the license to be a drunken asshole who leaves lousy tips. For a time he was the most popular poet in Russia, that land of bracing cold and women who look like Mike Ditka. The soused Slav churned out bland metrical screeds, most of which described how great it was to be Russian.

He was married for a short while to snake-dancing earth mother Isadora Duncan. Together they toured Europe and the States, she a bloated Susan Sarandon, he a vodka-guzzling Ryan O'Neal. Their brief union was characterized by shattered crockery and Isadora's black eyes. Duncan was later to meet her own comic demise when her scarf got caught in the spokes of a car's wheel.

Esenin had better things to fixate upon than Isadora, chief among them his own mortality, which seemed to be a lifelong hang-up. "I am tired of life in my native land," he wrote in 1916. A year later he quaffed some poison after someone insulted him, surviving with nothing but a burnt mouth to show for it. "I can't imagine what's the matter with me," he confided in a letter to a friend, "but if things continue in this fashion, I'll kill myself. I'll hurl myself from my window and smash myself to pieces...." While in New York with Isadora, he spoke of jumping from the Woolworth Building as he clutched his last poem. Vacationing in Berlin, he stood on his hotel-room's window ledge, taunting Duncan with threats that he'd jump. At a Parisian dinner party thrown by his long-suffering spouse, he unsuccessfully hanged himself from a lamp, greatly amusing the assembled guests. "God!" he wrote to a friend in the spring of '23, "I could even hang myself from such loneliness." He tried to slit his wrists in 1924 and subsequently slashed himself with glass, prostrated himself on train tracks, jumped from windows, and stabbed himself, all to no avail. "I am tired of it all," he told a friend in 1925. So are we, Sergei, get on with it, already!

He was committed to a Moscow psychiatric clinic in November, 1925, checking himself out four days before Christmas and immediately going on a drunken bender. With the intent of turning over a new leaf, he moved to Leningrad on December 23. "Life is a cheap but necessary thing," he told a friend on the day after Christmas. He wrote his last poem early the next morning and handed it to his friend Elizaveta Ustinova, telling her to read it when alone. She came around knocking for Esenin on the morning of December 28, only to find him hanging from a rope he had thrown over a heating pipe. She finally read the poem, which she realized to be a suicide note. Esenin had written it in his own blood.



Esenin's open-casket funeral. A distant ancestor of rock star Prince looks on.

SUICIDE NOTE:

Goodbye, my friend, goodbye.
My dear, you are in my heart.
Predestined separation
Promises a future meeting.

Goodbye, my friend, without handshake
  and words,
Do not grieve and sadden your brow—
In this life there's nothing new
  in dying
But nor, of course, is living any newer.



A Russian suicide club formed in Esenin's honor, claiming thirteen victims in the Urals by the end of 1928.



Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble. Within the three-foot-deep cauldron seethed melted iron heated to a flesh-evaporating twenty-six hundred degrees Fahrenheit. It was a breezy Thursday afternoon in October, 1967, and workers at San Francisco's Pacific Foundry Company were savoring their lunch hour, perhaps chewing on ham sandwiches, playing checkers, and ogling low-grade beaver mags. A spectral figure, his face oddly resembling the hue and texture of oatmeal, suddenly appeared in the plant. He quietly walked over to a platform suspended above the vat of boiling iron. He paced back and forth for a few moments, then stepped into the liquid metal as calmly as if he were sliding into a hot tub. Despite what must have been soul-cauterizing pain, witnesses said that the man emitted nary a chirp or cluck as he descended into the molten mass.

A murderously hot silvery spray blasted outward in a thirty-foot radius. Astonished workers frantically skedaddled to switch off the heat. After the smoke cleared, all that could be retrieved of the mysterious oatmeal man were a few scattered bone chips.

As investigators began to piece together the facts, they deduced that the man who self-scorified had only minutes earlier attempted to drown himself in a parked truck filled with liquid cement. Workers yanked him from the gushy concrete, only to be met with a reprimand: "Leave me alone—I'm trying to make an impression." It was thought that he walked directly from the truck to the iron foundry, the drying concrete accounting for his crusty veneer.

When the mother of twenty-eight-year-old unemployed barber Donald C. Forrester reported her son missing, police showed photos to foundry workers, who positively identified him. Forrester's mom had been living with Don for two months after becoming concerned when he sent her a string of deliriously religious letters, one of which contained Donald's assertion that he was "the true Christ."

SUICIDE

HONORABLE MENTION

A segment of charred vertebrae was all that could be salvaged of George Towler after he threw himself in a furnace filled with fifty tons of liquefied metal at the Farnley Ironworks near Leeds, England, in 1854.

#30
The "Gloomy Sunday" Suicides
BLAME IT ON THE HUNGARIAN DEATH TANGO

Enemies of free speech have always argued that an unfettered First Amendment ignores the easy suggestibility of the great unwashed herd. The human mind, according to their contention, is a malleable emotive organ more easily impressed by potent images than linear logic. Certain topics, they say, are so inherently disturbing that they bypass one's reasoning and work their destructive powers directly on the heart.

A suicide cluster which emerged from Hungary in the mid-1930s would seem to bolster their case. A grim tango called "Gloomy Sunday" was said to have fatally unhinged at least eighteen discomfited Magyars. More than a few victims were found with the record still spinning on their turntables. Written in 1933, the song moved in on the listener like a low-lying fog, a pale blue cloud in which several frail beings lost themselves. The song's narrator grieves over a recently departed lover ("Angels have no thought of ever returning you") and ponders whether suicide could effect a rapprochement. ("Would they be angry if I thought of joining you?") The song finishes with the words, "My heart and I have decided to end it all." A snifter's worth of the dismal lyrics proved so lethal, Hungarian officials banned the draught entirely in 1936.

Several English-language versions of "Gloomy Sunday" were released in America, where it was marketed as "The Famous Hungarian Suicide Song." The tune was connected to at least two suicides in the States: Thirteen-year-old Floyd Hamilton, Jr., of Michigan hanged himself in April, 1936, leaving the lyrics to "Gloomy Sunday" in his pocket. In June of that year, William Hamilton Mitchell huffed a fatal dose of carbon monoxide in Seattle. His pocket, too, contained a copy of the lyrics.

Rezsoe Seres, the song's composer, reportedly spent the rest of his life in a depression because he was never able to crank out a follow-up smash. In 1968, he leapt to his death from a tiny Budapest apartment.

#31
James Green
A LEG UP ON THE OTHERS

Are the disabled immune from ridicule? Does humor miss the mark when it aims at easy targets? Should someone be punished if they poke fun at the afflicted without sharing their affliction? Is it wrong to boot someone in the teeth as they squirm helplessly on the ground?

FUCK, NO! If you sincerely believe that crippled people are no different than the rest of us, you'd do well to quit patronizing them. Just because they vainly clutch at phantom limbs doesn't mean they didn't cry at the end of *Terms of Endearment.* They're human beings, and as such, they deserve the same abuse everyone else does. Colostomy bags aren't hilarious? Full-blown palsy isn't fun to watch? Are you going to sit there and tell me you've never purposely given a blind person the wrong directions? Fuck the disabled! If some paralytic vents his bitterness at you, roll his wheelchair into traffic. If some cripple pops shit at you, knock his goddamned crutches out from under him. What's he gonna do? *Beat you up?*

Although James Green was fitted with a wooden leg, he was an anthropoid like the rest of us. He limped around New York's five boroughs like Captain Ahab, leaving a trail of bad memories and tiny splinters. In 1974, when the errant amputee set fire to his Brooklyn apartment, police treated him no differently than they'd treat a two-legged criminal—they threw him in the clink. Having reached his limit, the stumpy felon removed that Louisville Slugger of his, jammed it between the cell bars, wrapped its connective straps around his neck, and hanged himself. The peg-legged pyromaniac's earlier act of arson may have itself been a veiled suicide attempt, given the fact that his leg was a virtual Duraflame log.



When British citizen David Hudson self-immolated with flaming paraffin in 1970, he hid a suicide note inside his prosthetic leg.

#32
Charles Haefner
BREWED WITH THE FINEST MALT, BARLEY, AND HOPS

Beer. Charles Haefner couldn't get away from it. During the day, he toiled in a Manhattan white-beer brewery. He went home and drank beer all night, pissed it away, and returned in the morning to make more beer. By the time he reached thirty, his body was probably ninety-five percent beer.

But all the beer in the world couldn't fix what ailed (or, pardon the pun, "aled") him. He was far away from his native Deutschland, with only a cup of grog to warm his soul. He sat brooding every night, sipping at the Nectar of the Lumpen.

One frosty day in January, 1866, he paid off all his debts to his landlord, walked across the street to the brewery, and headed for a vat in which beer was brewing. He stepped into the gleaming copper kettle, lowering himself into the stewing mash, which scalded his skin on contact. The troubled Teuton stood implacably within the gurgling brew, displaying the imperturbability peculiar to his lineage. In the face of blistering pain, he neither flapped about nor tried to exit the boiling kettle. Having heard a lung-popping scream, workers ran in Haefner's direction. They pulled him from the vat, but by that time his lower body was pretty much stewed chicken. The hooch-guzzling Kraut died of burns received while being boiled in brewski.



The owner of a brewery near the famous Czechoslovakian beer-making village of Pilsen, dejected because of lagging sales, leapt into his own Pilsner on June 21, 1932. In a suicide note, he pledged to haunt customers who had abandoned him.



Also despondent because of a dip in revenues, St. Louis brewery owner William J. Lemp shot himself in his office on December 29, 1922.



In 1932, Benjamin Natkins, a founder of Nedick's, Inc., drowned after diving into fifty gallons of vinegar in Morristown, New Jersey.

#33
William Gordon Hall
DRILLER KILLER

Holy, holy, holy. Auto-trepanation, the practice of boring a hole in one's head as a means of self-illumination, can be traced back almost to the days of the woolly mammoth. Since it's painful, senseless, and tailor-made for the atavistically naive, you can bet your nipple rings that the Beautiful People's skulls will soon look like wiffle balls.

Bill Hall, a fifty-seven-year-old Belfast executive, took a less affected but more decisive path to enlightenment in March, 1971. Unlike the fashion trepanationists, who chisel through their crania yet leave the soft brain matter untouched, Hall seized a portable power drill and sent the twirling steel bit deep into his head eight times. Now, burrowing into your own head once seems brazen enough, but Hall's seven additional excavations command quiet respect. A hastily summoned surgical team tried without success to plug holes in Hall's mind, which by that time had become the proverbial sieve.

PHIL CISCO

HONORABLE MENTION

Seventy-one-year-old carpenter Joey Boothroyde of Chichester, England, made a fatal puncture wound in his heart with an electric drill in 1987.

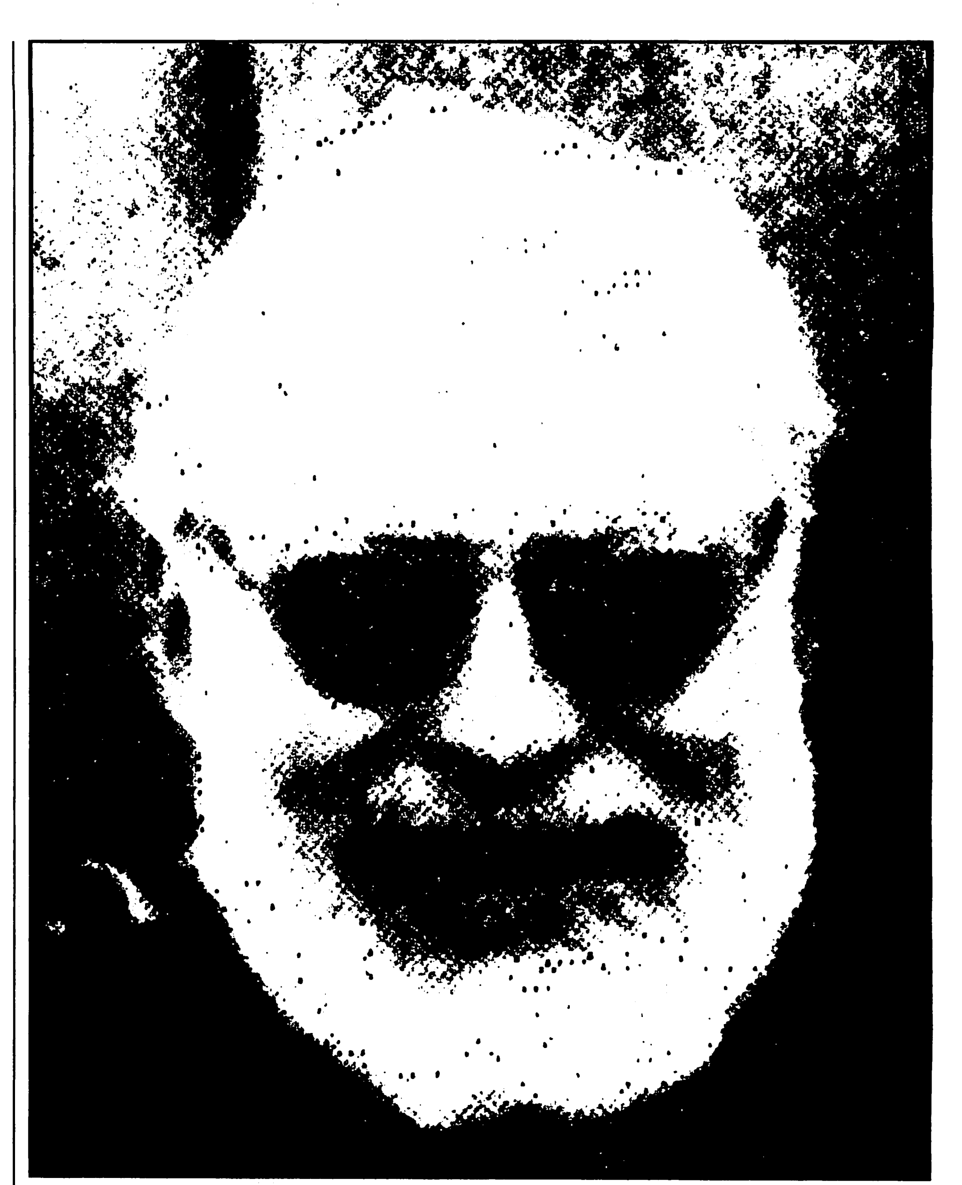
#34
Ernest Hemingway
FOR WHOM THE SHOTGUN BLOWS

"Papa" Hemingway bit into life as if it were a big bloody burrito. He merrily bulldozed his way through this world like Santa Claus with a painful case of priapism. He was so cartoonishly macho, it's easy to picture him chewing off his own umbilical cord when he was born.

Perhaps uncomfortable with the implied effeminacy of his role as a literary luminary, Hemingway "proved" his mettle by drinking, hunting, lion-taming, deep-sea fishing, and boxing indigenous Third World peoples. He savored the hemorrhaging spectacle of a good bullfight. He chased poontang like a cat cornering a cockroach. To his credit, he threatened writers and assaulted photographers. When his leg was ripped open by mortar fire during World War I, Hemingway relished the experience as one might enjoy a strawberry dipped in Kool Whip. In 1954, when two flaming plane crashes within two days left him with burns, a concussion, a ruptured kidney, and double vision, he walked out of the African jungle swilling rotgut liquor and laughing at premature obituaries.

His scrotal gusto was so pronounced, it bordered on a death wish. He once told a German journalist that death was "just another whore." He was fond of saying that "man can be destroyed but not defeated." While hunting with friends in 1932, he casually mentioned that he'd kill himself "if it came to that." He gave another friend an unsolicited demonstration of how to point a shotgun at yourself and trip the trigger with your toe. He entered into a playful suicide pact with a woman named Clara Spiegel in 1939. His novel *Islands in the Stream* even featured a character named "Suicides."

But by the late fifties, as he wandered about his home in Idaho munching on peanut-butter-and-onion sandwiches, friends noticed that Big Ernie was getting a bit loopy. His ruddy complexion was gone. His once-beefy arms and legs were reduced to celery sticks. He was certain that his house and car were bugged by federal agents. He suspected that people were tampering with his mail. He was sure that he'd be jailed for income-tax evasion and corrupting the morals of a minor, crimes which he hadn't committed and of which no one suspected him. He accused all his friends of accepting bribes to testify against him. He charged one of them with trying to run him over with a car. He kept looking over his shoulder, afraid that G-men were tailing him.



Doctors at Minnesota's Mayo Clinic diagnosed him as "depressive-persecutory" in November, 1960, but ain't that what you'd expect undercover FBI agents to say? Shrinks jolted him with at least eleven electroshock treatments, deepening his misery by blowing out his memory and thus crippling his writing ability. "It was a brilliant cure," he told a visitor, "but we lost the patient."

He returned from the funny farm with his suicidal urge strengthened. One morning in April of 1961, his wife Mary caught him in the vestibule holding a shotgun and two shells, gazing dreamily out the window at the Sawtooth Mountains. A charter plane was readied to wing Ernie back to Mayo. As his party was leaving for the plane, he told them he had forgotten something back in the house. He dashed inside, bolted the door, and headed for the gun rack. A friend ran in through another door, found him loading a shell into his shotgun, and tackled him, prying the weapon from his hands. The next day, a heavily sedated Hemingway was placed in the charter plane. While aloft, he tried to open the cabin door and leap. A friend gave him another injection of sedatives. When the plane made a pit stop in Wyoming after engine difficulty, Hemingway attempted to walk into another plane's whirling propellers but was restrained. After his charter was once more aflight, he again tried to bail out.

He received more electrical jump-starts at the clinic, almost entirely wiping out his ability to concentrate. When a visiting friend asked him why he wanted to kill himself, he replied with desperate passion: "What do you think happens to a man going on sixty-two when he realizes that he can never write the books and stories he promised himself? Or do any of the other things he promised himself in the good days?... If I can't exist on my own terms, then existence is impossible. Do you understand? That is how I've lived, and that is how I *must* live or not live."

At the height of his powers, Hemingway invented a spare, nonadjectival prose style from which American writers have never fully recovered. When it came time to kill himself, he did it in the same blunt, inelegant manner in which he wrote. After his second discharge from the Mayo Clinic, he and his wife took a scenic, unhurried drive back to Idaho, notable mainly for Hemingway's paranoia that the police would arrest him for transporting alcohol. The couple had a pleasant dinner upon arriving

home, after which Papa joined Mary in singing "Tutti Mi Chiamano Bionda" ("Everyone Calls Me Blond"). The next morning, July 2, 1961, he tiptoed down to the gun rack in his red robe while Mary slept, grabbed a silver-inlayed double-barreled Boss shotgun, and blew most of his head clean off his shoulders. Only his chin, mouth, and vestigial scraps of his cheeks were still connected to his body. Having spent years with his teeth buried in life's jugular vein, Hemingway finally turned and bit off his own head.



Ernest's father, Dr. Clarence Hemingway, shot himself with a Smith & Wesson revolver in December, 1928. In a morbid stroke of foreshadowing, he had given Ernest a shotgun for his twelfth birthday.



Ernest's brother Leicester, author of *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway,* killed himself with a borrowed handgun in September, 1982.

#35
Ann Hemmingway
KILLED BY REDDY KILOWATT?

Utility companies are evil monopolies, gouging consumers with unexplained tolls, levies, taxes, fees, and one-time-only charges. They are impenetrable corporate colossi, vampirizing common citizens with the icy calculation of crack peddlers. They are run by men with the hearts of termites, men whose sharp mandibles gnaw into our very souls.

Ann Hemmingway knew this, and it broke her moldy little heart. A sixty-nine-year-old British widow who lived alone and therefore had to fend with the East Midlands Electricity Board all by herself, she found herself lost in the bureaucracy, a helpless cog in the machinery which squashes us all. In 1971, the unfeeling energy consortium decided to punish its minions for allowing their power bills to accrue over extended periods. It instituted a practice of sending customers overestimated bills as a way to frighten them into having their meters read more often. Mrs. Hemmingway, for instance, hadn't received a meter reading for a year-and-a-half. The electric company sent the post-menopausal energy consumer a bill for eighteen-and-a-half pounds (about twenty-nine bucks at current exchange rates). Startled and feeling more than a little betrayed, Mrs. Hemmingway confided to a neighbor that the bill was a source of nearly inconquerable anguish. A coroner would later rule that the exorbitant pecuniary obligation was the root cause of Mrs. Hemmingway's suicide. As the tender old biddy began to decompose under six feet of soil, a clerk was finally sent to Hemmingway's former residence in order to get an accurate meter reading. It seems that they had overstated the old lady's debt, for she had in fact owed them less than two dollars.



In 1972, London resident Joyce Cooper leapt seventeen stories to her death from atop the North Sea gas company's office building after experiencing problems at home with her gas service.

#36
Andrew L. Hermann
NOW THAT'S METHOD ACTING!

Dick Shawn was a gifted comedian known for his prolonged improvisational outbursts. When he dropped dead of heart failure in the midst of a performance, people thought he was doing schtick. When the laughter died, people realized that Dick had, too.

Andy Hermann was a fledgling jokester, a madcap teen who never got a chance to play the big clubs. He was the eager-beaver little brother of Stephen Hermann, a student at

Hampshire College in Massachusetts. Andy planned to follow his older sibling into Hampshire as soon as he graduated from high school.

He liked to visit his big brother on campus, and Stephen gave him a chance to flex his comedic chops with an appearance on the school's closed-circuit student TV program, *Voice of the Top Two.* The show seemed an ideal forum for Andy's irreverent humor, as it once featured a nutty segment where students pretended to be Arabs and hijacked the proceedings. Everyone agreed that it was a knee-slapping moment.

Andy's fifteen minutes of infamy came in April, 1986, when he performed a skit he had written specifically for the program. His presentation was beamed live to students in dorm rooms at the tiny institute of higher learning. With mock-seriousness, he read a litany of grievances against the school, saying he was willing to die in protest of administrative inequities.

"Now I'm going to join my brothers," Andy announced as the speech ended, "and drink cyanide-impregnated Kool-Aid." He then chugged down half of the contents in a beer mug and brought in some supporting players to sing a spoof of the National Anthem. Going along with the gag, the other actors hauled Andy's body into the control room, giggling as he writhed and gasped for air. What a cutup, that Andy. The show's student producer entered the room and asked what had happened. "He drank cyanide," someone said amid guffaws. Not one to avoid shenanigans, the producer helped another student tote Andy's now-limp mass into the hallway. As time passed, everyone deserted the area after tiring of Andy's refusal to break character. They weren't aware that the "cyanide-impregnated Kool-Aid" was exactly that. It wasn't until later, when campus security guards discovered the lifeless scamp, that people realized Andrew Hermann's final joke was told at his own expense.

#37
Dr. Albert Herschman
HELL OF A TIME TO START A DIARY

When one decides that life is no longer interesting, that one has run through every sensation like multiple readings of a bad script, death sits brightly in a corner, the only unopened package. As with one's first kiss, haircut, or jail sentence, it shines like virgin snow waiting to be trampled. That moment of epiphany, the willful locking of horns with a potentially hostile unknown, is the spermy genesis of creativity.

And so it was that Dr. Albert Herschman, who had never jotted down a noteworthy phrase in his life, lifted a pen and began to describe his imminent death. An Austrian consular agent living in Milwaukee, Herschman in 1922 resolved that his time had come. He had his share of friends and success, but a recent spate of setbacks tugged at his stomach like an anchor. Surrounded by the familiar comforts of his downtown office, he swallowed three half-grain morphine tablets with a glass of water. With typically clinical Austrian detachment, he then used a pen and paper to record how it felt to stroll calmly into oblivion.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpts):

Life is nothing but a streetcar ride; when you come to your station you get off.... The morphine has put me into a condition of absolute mental painlessness. I am not attempting to review my past life and do not try to look into the future, as I believe that death is the end and that there is no hereafter. I deeply regret the grief my voluntary parting must bring for a time on my beloved ones. Ill health, however, and late reverses make my step desirable.

It is now 7:17 p.m., and if I didn't know that I have taken sufficient poison to warrant results, I could not notice it from my condition. Aside from fluttering heart action and contracted eye pupils and moderate drowsiness, I feel no results. Still, I cannot make up my mind to swallow the cyanide and have lit a cigar, awaiting further increases of drowsiness, and hope to soon be able to coax me into the inevitable.

7:42 p.m.—I am here yet, hesitating to take this cyanide. My thoughts become blurred from the morphine, and a sensation of supreme quietude reigns in me. If it was not for my beloved wife, who just phoned, I would go on waiting, but I am afraid of too long a delay, because a lapsing into unconsciousness might result in [my] being saved by medical assistance. Ten more minutes and then the end by cyanide.

I am in no manner kept in suspense, just pleasantly and curiously watching developments. Queer enough, my only wish is [that] I had an additional handkerchief so that I could dispose of the surplus perspiration, it being close and my skin clammy from the morphine effects.

—Dr. A.J.H.



Despondent over the fact that his brother had stolen his wife, Andrew Keller of Newark, New Jersey, described death's onset while inhaling kitchen gas one night in April, 1930:

SUICIDE NOTE:

It is now 11:15 p.m., and I have finished my letters, so [I] will read for about an hour or so until everyone in the house has retired.

This would be a real opportunity for an essay on "How it Feels to Sentence Oneself to Die," but who cares if it wouldn't matter a bit a hundred years from now? And then, so many darned suicides have an idea that the rest of the world is going to be interested in their theories on the "uselessness of living" or the "fascination of death"—horse feathers! They are interested in the prohibition question or the price of eggs in pies.

I'm fixing a little apparatus on the gas line—good idea. I'll get the full strength of the gas and prevent the odor of it from permeating the house and bringing on discovery too soon. Incidentally, I was twenty-two years of age on September 1, 1929.... The age on



my Marine Corps discharge is three years over. I had to lie about my age in order to get by.

There's two perfectly good pies here that someone might eat.

It is now 1:20 a.m. All is quiet on the Western front. All the drunks and night owls are in, so I'm off—no reprieve.

Took my "panacea" for all human ills. It won't be long now. I'll bet Florence and Ed [his wife and brother] are having uneasy dreams now. When the stuff starts to take effect, I'll plaster my little funnel to my face and turn on the gas.

Ten minutes later: My head is hot. I'm perspiring and shaky; brain is still clear, though. Wonder who will add up the pies tomorrow.

Still the same. 1:45 a.m. Hope I pass out by 2 a.m.

Gee, I love you so much, Florence. It's now 2:15 a.m. I feel very tired and a bit dizzy. I have the gas nozzle plastered on my face but disconnected from the gas jet. It's quite uncomfortable, damn it. My brain is very clear. I can see that my hand is shaking—it is hard to die when one is young. Now I wish oblivion would hurry.... [Note ends]



Unemployed New York bond salesman William M. Jones left a series of notes while gassing himself in July, 1928:

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpts):

...If humans had the sterling qualities of dogs, their faithfulness and friendship, this would be a fine world to live in....Your father admits he is a failure....

7:15 p.m.—I am getting dizzy. My legs are becoming weak. I would love to have a smoke but I do not dare.... [Rest of note is illegible]



Sucking kitchen gas through a tube while reclining amid a pile of cushions in the manner of a hookah-smoking Arabian princess, Laura Michaels of Los Angeles documented her death with a pencil one night in October, 1919:

SUICIDE NOTE:

I have lived too long, especially the last two days. I have prayed to die, but God does not hear sinners' prayers.

It is 10:45 p.m.

I have lost my baby [presumably her boyfriend, James Crotty], the only one I ever had. All I ask of God is that my darling mother will forgive me.

As for what I have, it's only my hope that God is better to others than to me.

Esther just phoned, and I had a great laugh as I answered the phone. I said, "There's someone prolonging my death." All I ask of my baby is for him to keep the record I last played. They are all lying on the Victrola, and, if possible, [I ask] for him to get my diamonds out and keep them, as a remembrance of me.

—Laura Michaels

P.S.: There is lots I'd love to say, but it's too late now. The phone just rang again, but I never answered it.

It is now 11:05 p.m.

Here's to my last drink.

As for S. on Washington Street, she is mad at me, and B. also, but God above knows I never did them wrong. And poor little Peggie, I dream of her most every night, and poor Jack also.

My tears would drown most anything, but it's too late now.

My prayer is, "God bless all I know."

I was never an enemy to anyone. God is my helper.

My last kiss [is] for my baby Jim.

You can imagine what my last thoughts were—engaged to you, [with you] loving someone else as you once loved me.

Poor little me.

It is now 11:44 o'clock p.m. [sic] [Note ends]

HONORABLE MENTION

In November, 1896, an embezzler named Edgar Lytle described death's onslaught as he lay in a Chicago hotel room's bed:

SUICIDE NOTE:

To M.D.:

Drank one ounce of laudanum. After five minutes feel little or no pain. Heart action now pronounced. A slight pain in stomach.

Note—My stomach is very weak, having suffered for years with acute dyspepsia.

Ten minutes—Condition about the same. Pulse rapid, and pains in wrists, and slight pain in region of heart. Hand trembles. A feeling of dullness, with more pain in all parts of the body.

(Note)—Will keep up this description of effects as long as possible. Hope it will be of use to medical science. Eyes show change. A feeling of drowsiness coming on. Sort of a feeling of intoxication, accompanied by slight fever.

Twenty minutes—Pain increasing. A slight perspiration started. Have a sort of numb feeling and no pain. [Rest is illegible]



In 1928, twenty-two-year-old psychology student Michael Bross left this brief note while filling his lungs with gas in his Yonkers kitchen:

SUICIDE NOTE:

Well, I put on the gas. I know what life is. I want to know what death is. It won't be long now. It takes a long time to feel gas. It don't smell bad. I'm getting a little dizzy. I'm losing my ambition to write— [Remainder illegible]

#38
Adolf Hitler
BANG! GOES DER FÜHRER

Motherfucking vegetarians, always causing trouble. Nearly fifty years after his death, this lettuce-chewing leather boy remains the

SUICIDE



The baby, the boy, the little Hitler boy.

planet's number-one emblem of all-engulfing evil. But whatever his sins, it's hard to deny that he played the villain's role with incomparable panache. As reprehensible as his world-domination scheme might have been, it should have at least won an Oscar for set design.

Perhaps the most frightening assertion that one could make about Hitler is that he was *not* a fire-breathing dragon, that he was a human being, someone who put on his armbands one bicep at a time. And despite all his *Übermensch*ian puffery, Dolfy himself was far from a model specimen. He suffered from poor vision, headaches, and a nervous condition which may have been Parkinson's disease. There were also rumors of a tragicomic set of flaws: that Deutschland's number-one scrotum contained only one testicle; that Hitler could only get aroused after being shit upon; and that he cut farts which could render grizzly bears unconscious.

For a brief time he nearly ruled the world. But by January, 1945, Hitler's *Wehrmacht* was weary. His *Luftwaffe* was limp. His panzers were pooped. With hostile armies approaching from all sides, he hid himself in a concrete bunker fifty feet below Berlin's ravaged streets. The accommodations were far from palatial. The smell of damp cement filled the corridors. Plaster hung from the walls. A diesel engine slowly whirred. Lights swelled on and off in response to the bombings. Puffy and ghostly, with glazed eyes and his right hand shaking uncontrollably, a hunched-over Hitler goose-stepped around the *Führerbunker*, screaming that his generals had betrayed him. This isn't to imply that he lost his fun-loving side: When he wasn't agonizing over his ever-shrinking domain, he found time to play with his dog Blondi's puppies and make small talk with Joseph Goebbels's six children, Helga, Holde, Hilde, Heidi, Hedda, and Helmut.

By the end of April, with ragtag packs of Hitler Youth defending a few crater-filled blocks in central Berlin, Adolf realized that the end was near. He didn't want the Russians to capture him on their beloved May Day and parade him around in a cage like an Aryan orangutan. On the twenty-eighth, he dictated his last testament to his secretary, blaming you-know-which-race for everything and insisting that he was a pacifist who had an unwanted war thrust upon him. After midnight, he married Eva Braun, the Third Reich's premier piece of ass. During a festive sandwiches-and-champagne reception, he dampened everyone's spirits by shrieking that he was finished.

At three-thirty p.m. on April 30, with Russian troops only a block away, Adolf and Eva bade farewell to their underlings. After doling out their adieus, they entered Hitler's private apartment and slammed the door behind them. Wishing to leave the world as "a beautiful corpse," Eva swallowed a cyanide capsule. Hitler shot himself in the right temple with a Walther pistol. Guards found the Nazi sweethearts on opposite ends of a blue-and-white sofa. Flowers were scattered on the floor. Hitler was slumped over, his head bleeding onto the carpet. He clutched a picture of his mother to his chest. The mom and pop of the master race were then wrapped in blankets and taken to a trench in the Chancellery garden, where they were soaked with gasoline and set ablaze. It reportedly took two-and-a-half hours for the flames to subside. Their ashes were buried around eleven p.m.

Thus ends the story of a frustrated little demon who cut a wider swath in the global psyche than you or I ever will. While you dance on his grave, hock loogies on his likeness, and dismiss eugenics as quackery, think for a minute—if you had only bought the man's paintings, it never would have come to this!



Hey, Adolf, wake up! Oh, fuck—he's DEAD!

#39 Abbie Hoffman

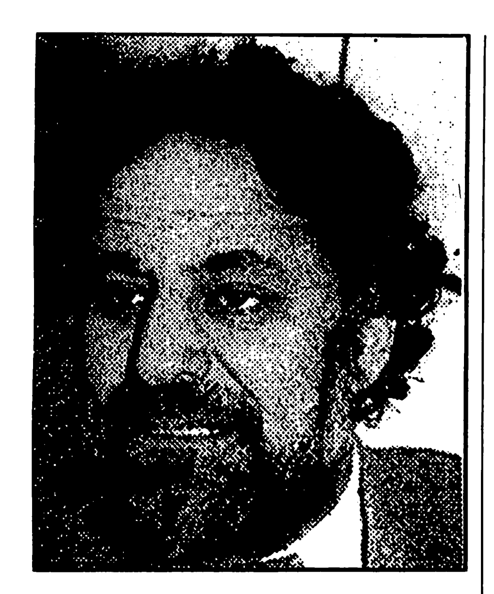
STEAL THIS LIFE

The problem with social activists is that most of them lead personal lives which make those of loan sharks seem moral by comparison. Common sense dictates that if you can't properly wipe your own ass, you have no business trying to clean up the world.

But Abbie Hoffman flourished in an era when common sense was viewed as a repressive tool of the Old Guard. This was back when one's level of political commitment was gauged by the strength of one's armpit funk, when your "progressiveness" was measured by how well you emulated primitive hunter-gatherer tribes. America's living standard had reached its apogee, and material wealth was so great, people could afford to reject it.

Hoffman, a leading exponent of the Caucasian Afro, stood apart from most of his generation's Che clones by dint of his sense of humor. Although the Bushy One may have been misguided, he was sincerely so. He was also very entertaining in his ability to bait people with their worst fears. The image of a Yiddish yippie with Medusa locks burning the flag and threatening to dose public reservoirs with LSD must have rattled them down at the V.F.W. hall. It was fun to watch him terrify the squares—you have to remember that this was a time when *right*-wingers were the humorlessly dogmatic ones.

He went "underground" after a coke bust in the seventies and had extensive plastic surgery so the "pigs" wouldn't recognize him. When he emerged from hibernation in the eighties, he was a rather predictable leftist banner-carrier and diagnosed manic-depressive. He took residence in a rural Pennsylvania turkey coop that he and a friend named Michael Waldron had remade into an apartment. Waldron would later recall how Abbie practiced his political speeches in front of a pair of llamas who grazed near his cement-block coop. On April 12, 1987,



Waldron went to the apartment and discovered Abbie's dead body lying fully clothed in bed. He had overdosed on phenobarbital and alcohol. His brother Jack later explained that Abbie was "somewhat careless with pills." I guess so—he had "accidentally" swallowed nearly two hundred of them. Some folks theorized that Abbie was despondent that the sixties would never return. If the dumb shit had only waited a few years, he'd be moon-dancing amid an appalling tie-dyed renaissance, albeit one cloaked in pounding dance music and promises of cybernetic salvation.

In college, I once watched the fiery revolutionary debate apostate yippie Jerry Rubin. When I tried to shake Ab's hand, he acted as if I had stolen a gram of red hash from him before grudgingly tendering his paw. Fuck you, Abbie. I hope your room in hell is staffed with a dozen Chicago cops in full riot gear.

#40
Danny Holley
ONE LESS MOUTH TO FEED

When Army Sergeant Johnnie Holley was transferred to South Korea, his thirteen-year-old son Danny became the man of the house. Danny assumed the burden like a good little soldier, shedding all youthful horseplay for his new role as family sentinel. From sunup to sundown, he could be seen rummaging through the garbage, searching for aluminum cans. At the end of each day, he carried his bounty to a local supermarket, where he redeemed them for a penny each. On a good day, Danny found up to nine hundred cans and would bring home about nine dollars. It wasn't much, but his family was barely scraping by on a military salary, and even a little money helped keep rice and beans on the table.

Life had been hard for Danny, his Irish-born mother, and his three younger siblings since they had moved with their black father from West Germany to a rented house near California's Fort Ord. The house was expensive, but on-base accommodations which the Army had promised them never materialized. A bureaucratic blooper kept the family's savings languishing in a German bank. Yet another snafu sent their car from Germany to an unknown destination, and no one seemed able to find it. The Army gave them a thirteen-hundred-dollar emergency loan, but rent and food expenses quickly sucked it dry. Even a book of free bus passes given to Mrs. Holley was used up in no time. With the cupboard bare and Mr. Holley overseas, the family sat and waited. Danny finally took to picking through garbage dumps like an old, hungry dog. "If there was one less mouth to feed," he frequently told his mom, "things would be better."

On August 27, 1984, Danny decided to remove that mouth from the family equation. As Mrs. Holley played with her other three children in front of the house, Danny went around back. He fastened a cable onto a small planter's hook which was screwed into a wooden eave. The earnest little boy wrapped the cable around his neck and sent himself swinging in the warm summer wind.



At Danny's funeral, an Army chaplain called the penny-pinching mulatto "a young man who took too much responsibility on himself." Hope arrived too late to save Danny: The family car was finally located in New Orleans; assets thought to have been frozen in Germany were traced to a Kentucky bank; and nearly two thousand dollars' worth of charitable donations flowed in from around the country. Another mouth to feed wouldn't be a problem now, but rigor mortis had closed it shut forever.



What a barrel of laughs Derek Humphry must be—as president and founder of Oregon's Hemlock Society, he's the den mother to the world's largest self-terminating social club. His book *Final Exit*, a nuts-and-bolts how-to primer on suicide, shot to the top of the best-seller charts and resulted in a publicity blitz for the voluntary-euthanasia camp. Alongside Jack Kevorkian, he's probably the world's most visible champion of the right to "self-deliverance." Oh, I almost forgot—he had two wives, both of whom killed themselves.

Jean, his first spouse, was diagnosed with malignant tit cancer in 1972. It spread throughout her dairy stations and into her spine. By 1974, doctors said she had less than a year to live. Her leg bones were so brittle, they would have snapped like twigs if she had dared to walk. Doped-up and wheelchair-bound, she made Derek promise to help her end the suffering. A loving, devoted hubby, Derek quickly procured some codeine and Seconal. Over breakfast one morning in 1975, Jean told Derek that she was ready. The couple, who had been married for twenty-two years, reminisced about the good times. Derek then mixed the drugs into a coffee cup and left it on Jean's night stand. Within fifty minutes, Jean was as dead as a sea gull in the Exxon Valdez oil slick. Derek would later call it an "act of love."

Since assisted suicide is a crime in Great Britain, Derek didn't tell many people about how he had helped usher Jean into the Holy City. One of those he confided to was Ann Wickett, an American student of Shakespeare whom he married in 1976. Ann was touched at how sweet and unselfish Derek's act of love was, urging him to write a book about the experience. *Jean's Way* was published in 1978, marking the dawn of Humphry's celebrity.

Along with a lawyer and a religion professor, Derek and Ann founded the Hemlock Society in August, 1980. Ann was by this time the First Lady of Suicide, a whole-hog convert to Derek's Gospel of self-deliverance. In 1986, when Ann's parents groused about failing (but not fatal) health, she and Derek flew to Boston with a megadose of the barbiturate Vesparax and helped kick the old poops through the goal posts of heaven. When Ann's mom began to gag on the downers, Derek instructed Ann to place a plastic laundry bag over the dried-up hag's mouth. "She died very peacefully," Ann would later say, "but I walked away from that house thinking we're both murderers." She was startled at how placid Derek seemed about the incident. "He could walk away from it," she said, "and within twenty-four hours he was back again mowing the lawn." Ann would write an unconvincingly fictionalized account of her parents' twin suicide in the book *Double Exit*.

Ann was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1989. Only days after she started chemotherapy, Derek left a message on her answering machine saying that he wanted a divorce. Ann wigged out and was committed to a psychiatric institution. Upon her release, she tried to persuade Hemlock's staff to fire Derek, only to find that they had changed the office's locks and left her without a key. Derek was soon calling her a "borderline personality" who had merely been afflicted with "a touch of cancer." Ann shot back, accusing Derek of having confessed to her that he had smothered his first wife with a



Ann Humphry: Like Derek "Final Exit" Humphry's former wife Jean, she had boob cancer. Like Jean, she killed herself.

pillow, an act which would have constituted murder. She also filed suit against him for libel and slander, citing remarks he had made about her allegedly psychotic behavior. Her attorneys decided that the suit wasn't worth pursuing. That, coupled with the fact that several publishers had rejected her "I'm-a-chick-who-survived-breast-cancer" book proposal while Derek's *Final Exit* topped the charts, was probably too much to take.

On October 1, 1991, seated in the living room of her woodsy Oregon ranch, Ann made a videotape explaining why she wanted to kill herself. With her was Julie Horvath, a vocal anti-euthanasia agitator Ann had secretly befriended during Horvath's debates with Derek. On the tape, Ann explained that she had reconsidered her position on the right-to-die movement when Derek seemed unmoved by her cancer diagnosis: "I remember feeling really chilled to the bone because now it was my life and my dying, and it was kind of like, 'Good, get out of the way as quickly as possible.'... I know I was being pushed out of the picture."

The next day, after Horvath had flown back to Los Angeles, Ann wrote a series of goodbye notes. She let her Scottish Highland cattle run loose and hitched her Arabian horse to a trailer. Blasting the soundtrack to *Rocky IV*, she drove a hundred miles through the Oregon wilderness and parked at the edge of a trail. She then mounted her horse and galloped to a pine-dotted meadow facing the Three Sisters Mountains. It was near sunset at one of her favorite places on earth. She set the horse free and sat down with her back to a tree. Then, using a handful of pills and a bottle of Chevis Regal, she delivered herself. A search team found her six days later. For the stated purpose of "damage control," Derek took out a half-page ad in the *New York Times*, explaining that "Ann was dogged by emotional problems...."

Derek keeps blazing trails, a professional widower whose reputation grows as the bodies mount. As of 1991, the Hemlock Society (or, as we like to call it, "Deathco.") could brag of forty-six thousand members, with an estimated eight hundred new suicide students joining each month. Derek's transcontinental fame, his publishing triumphs, and his droopy basset-hound looks would make him quite the catch for any nubile seeking an apprenticeship in self-cessation: "That's right, Derek, deliver me, baby, oh, ohhh, DE-LIV-ER MEEEE!" But sorry, ladies—Derek has married again!

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Ann's note):

Derek:

There. You got what you wanted. Ever since I was diagnosed as having cancer, you have done everything conceivable to precipitate my death.

I was not alone in recognizing what you were doing. What you did—desertion and abandonment and subsequent harrassment [sic] of a dying woman—is so unspeakable, there are no words to describe the horror of it.

Yet you know. And others know, too. You will have to live with this untiol [sic] you die.

May you never, ever forget.

Ann

#42 *The Ingersoll Suicides*

TAKE HEART! KILL YOURSELF!

Some people will do just about anything you tell them to do. Like speed-snorting chinchillas, they scurry about trying to please others. They've amputated their egos with one swift razor's swipe, and feelings of self-worth only come in the form of transfusions from others. They'll fluff up your pillow to make you feel good, but it makes them feel even better. If you ask for a couple of ice cubes to freshen your lemonade, they'll fetch a whole tray. If you assure them that it's in their best interest, they'll even kill themselves.

"Suicide is not Death" was one of the headlines for a series of pro-suicide newspaper articles published by the New York *World* in the summer of 1894. Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, known in his day as "The Great Agnostic," was a purported contributor to the forum. Despite an avowed anti-religious stance, Ingersoll's polemical prose seemed suited for the pulpit. "Kill yourself!" he allegedly howled in the article. "You are poor? Kill yourself! You are lonely? Kill yourself! Be your own judge. Be your own jury. Acquit yourself before trial. Suspend sentence on yourself before you convict yourself. Escape from the supreme jurisdiction—your own. Be your own judge. Kill yourself!... You are an important heir. Kill your lagging predecessor! You are a discontented wife—kill your husband! You are a freedom-seeking son—kill your father! You are weary of repression and worn out by advice—kill your mother! You are disgusted with spiritual dependence—kill God!... Take heart, poor friend! Take heart! Take heart! Kill yourself!"

Who could argue? During the month after these ravings were published, at least three New Yorkers were persuaded to kill themselves, and a fourth was murdered by her suicidal lover. A fifth tried committing suicide and failed. All of them left incontrovertible evidence that Ingersoll had been an inspiration. The most-publicized case was that of Julius Marcus and his seventeen-year-old lover, Juliette Fournier. In the early morning hours of August 21, 1894, Julius shot Juliette in the heart before shooting himself. Julius was discovered lying on top of Juliette in an isolated stretch of Central Park. In his pocket was found a clipping of "Suicide is not Death." The case scandalized New York because Fournier was committing adultery through her involvement with Marcus. She had been married to her own uncle, a man more than twice her age.

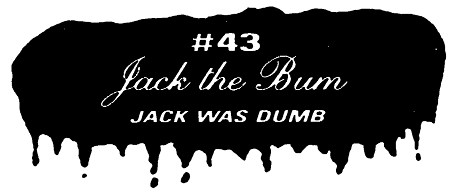
In September, an alcoholic vaudevillian named John Del Vecho and his wife swallowed carbolic acid in their boarding house on Manhattan's Upper West Side. "Perhaps it is owing to my oversensitiveness," he wrote in his bon voyage letter, "or from reading Ingersoll's theories, I don't know which. But I know that I have done nothing evil or nothing to merit the reproaches of honest people (except drink). May God forgive me." God apparently did, because while his wife went the way of all flesh, Del Vecho survived both the carbolic acid and a self-inflicted razor wound to his throat.

A Brooklyn woman named Emma Gould, reportedly not the least bit suicidal until she read Ingersoll's article, became preoccupied with self-termination after poring over the good Colonel's words. A boarding-house landlady,

she hectored all her tenants with endless tirades about suicide before tippling a fatal dose of poison.

Competing New York newspapers, most notably the *Times*, pounced on the opportunity to condemn the *World* for publishing Ingersoll's invective. "The Satanic journalism of New York has at last had its baptism of blood," crowed the *Times,* calling Ingersoll "the running footman of the devil."

Ingersoll, who had been out of town during most of the furor, returned highly miffed at the *World* and threatened to sue. He claimed that a *World* reporter had interviewed him and then rearranged the answers, making it appear that Ingersoll had written the article. Taken in their proper context, Ingersoll insisted, his quotes would not have given such a pro-suicide impression. Still, it's hard to imagine how an injunction as strong as "Take heart! Kill yourself!" could be decontextualized. Perhaps the reporter had lopped off a final disclaimer by Ingersoll, something such as, "Never mind!" or that grating retraction so popular among the kids today, "—not!"



Jackie R. lived in the same suburban Philadelphia tract-housing community in which I was raised. Culled from the same inbred Irish-Catholic stock as the rest of us, Jackie was a dim bulb by any standards. He was a ganglier version of *Mad* magazine's Alfred E. Neuman, although I'm reasonably sure that Alfred E. wasn't cataleptic from cheap beer and angel dust. In later life, Jackie was rumored to have found his calling as a meth merchant for the Warlocks motorcycle gang. But before he dropped out of school, he did something so stupid, people still talk about it. He cheated on a test, copying all the answers from a person seated next to him. Luckily, the other person had studied, so Jackie answered most of the questions right. What raised the teacher's suspicions was the fact that Jackie had also copied the other person's name.

Until I heard about Jack the Bum, I considered Jackie R.'s lamebrained faux pas the single most imbecilic act I'd encountered. Then again, there was an in-law of mine who, staring at a hotel swimming pool, asked, "How can it be eight feet on one end and three feet on the other end when it's even on top?" Regardless, Jack the Bum has both of them beaten. Described by the *New York Times* as a "forlorn little hoodlum," Jack was a reform-school grad who at eighteen was making a living by burglarizing railroad cars and doing odd jobs for Betty Harris, a "colored washwoman" from Upper Manhattan. On the morning of April 10, 1892, he visited Mrs. Harris's apartment and found her stoking the breakfast fires with a handful of guests. Weaving about and slurring his words, Jack was obviously blotto, but the assembled party paid him little mind. Feeling slighted, Jack drew a revolver and pointed it at itinerant plumber George Stevens. Stevens firmly instructed Jack to drop the gun. Jack pulled the trigger instead, but no round was expended. Jack was undoubtedly embarrassed that Mrs. Harris and her visitors, probably his only friends in the world, would think that he couldn't even fire a gun properly. He would set the matter straight, elevate himself once again in their eyes. "I'll show you how to do it," Jack said, and into his head he sent a bullet, which was miraculously able to find its way into his pea-sized brain.



In 1988, Dallas residents Jerry Apodaca and Tim Rhea were engaged in a friendly debate as to whether a well-placed karate kick could knock a gun from an attacker's hand. Apodaca thought it was possible, but when he attempted to boot a .45-caliber pistol out of Rhea's claw, the gun went off, killing Rhea. Feeling like a schmuck, Apodaca called 911 and then shot himself.



The life of a genetic mutant is indeed a bittersweet one. Other people fixate on your peculiarity with equal helpings of attention (which forms the basis of love) and repulsion (which limits your social life to blowup dolls and vinyl fellating devices which plug into an auto's cigarette-lighter jack).

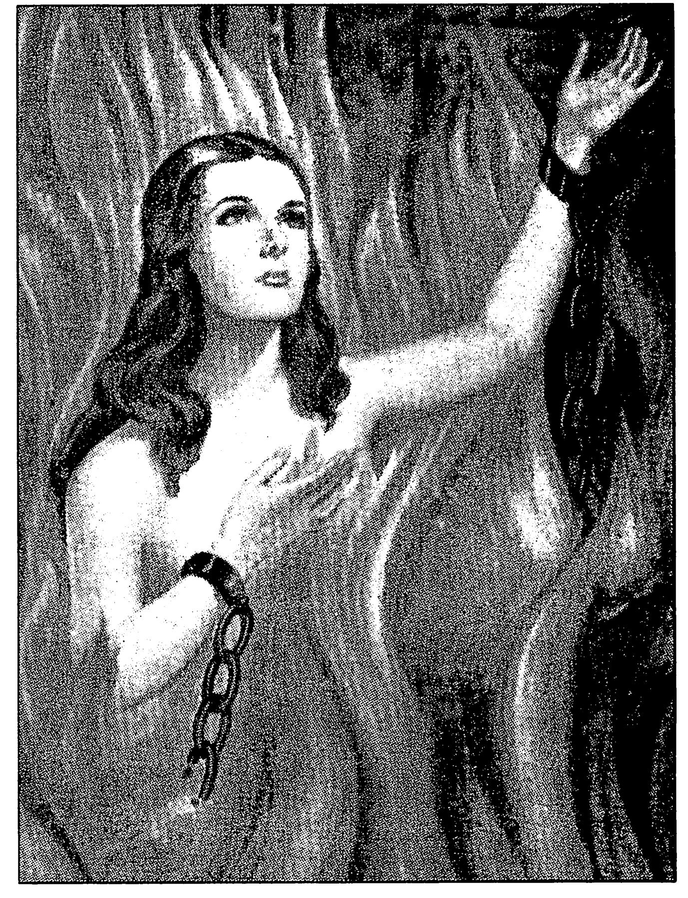
Joe, the Boy with Elastic Skin, had received such conflicting signals all his life. Born Clarence H. Alexander, his epidermal malformity provided him with a decent living, but it also amplified those distant pangs of otherness. A sideshow freak for Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Joe sated the loutish desires of gawking onlookers by tugging at his spongy hide. Night after night, in town after town, he served up cheap thrills by pulling at his pelt like so much chewing gum. But living out of a suitcase, as anyone who's spent time in a rock band or fleeing the feds knows, ultimately numbs the higher emotions.

By the summer of 1927, Joe felt beaten down by the grueling existence. His heart alighted on the Tattooed Lady, but the unfeeling bitch spurned his advances. Joe probably had come to expect rejection from the normals, but to be shunned by a fellow freak was gabba-gabba-hateful. One sweltering July night in Michigan, as the curious ticket-holders clustered around Joe's sideshow platform, the rubbery romantic guzzled a bottle filled with strychnine. Several women fainted as Joe collapsed. Circus workers seized Joe's bouncy bulk and motored it toward a local hospital, but Joe expired en route. It's a pity that the Tattooed Lady never responded to Joe's overtures, for his skin condition made him perfectly suited to ravish her with the notorious pleasures of the Sumatran Guava Bat Trick.



The international feminist conspiracy purses its hairy lips at the idea of heterosexual devotion, particularly when it involves sacrifice. They find theoretical justification in getting clubbed like a baby seal on behalf of pan-cervical unity, but to give of oneself for some man's stinky ass represents the summit of gaucheness.

"Go fuck thyself," retort traditional Hindu women, "may Lord Vishnu reincarnate you as a



lowly sea snail." For untold millennia, back to the days of the Rig-Vedas and Krishna's blue-faced chariot ride, Hindu babes have observed the stately practice of suttee. Rather than endure a widowhood nibbling on stale samosas and accruing karmic demerits, many wives of newly dead Hin-dudes choose to join their mates in a barbecue for the gods. After the deceased's funeral pyre is prepared with coconuts, sandalwood, and a clarified-butter product known as ghee, the bereaved female mounts the heap of kindling and calmly buoys her husband's head in her lap. A male relative then ignites the brush pile with a torch, and the faithful squaw cremates her way onto a higher spiritual plane. When the flames recede, observants rush to pick among the embers, which are considered relics.

Suttee was banned in India by British imperialists in 1829, but the ritual has proven to be alarmingly resilient. If the widow's husband was particularly noteworthy, a good suttee can draw zealots in crowds befitting a soccer game. In 1987, after twenty-four-year-old Maal Singh's appendix blew, his teenaged wife Roop Kanwar willingly torched herself along with him. Roopie-roo's martyr status was inflated when her relatives were busted for aiding a suicide. Twelve days after the connubial bonfire, over a hundred thousand believers squeezed into the tiny hamlet of Deorala for a celebration of Kanwar's self-immolation. The whole event resembled a dot-head Lollapalooza, with vendors selling photos of the toasted lovebirds.

Of course, if Roop had died first instead of her husband, no one would have expected him to follow her into eternity. They wouldn't have flinched if he ran around town squirting his jism all over the place like cake frosting. That may not be fair, but it's the way of the world, sweetie pie.

#46
Doug Kenney
NATIONAL LAMPOON'S SUICIDAL VACATION

The *National Lampoon* was a humor magazine which flourished in the button-fly days of the early seventies, and at its best, it wasn't half-bad. Perhaps its most lasting achievement was its mass-marketing of death humor, epitomized by the oft-imitated *If You Don't Buy This Magazine, We'll Kill This Dog* cover of January, 1973. For the most part, though, it rarely transcended its undeclared role as a clearinghouse for comedic juvenilia appealing to WASPish frat spuds. It was a spawning ground for such latter-day country-club apologists as P.J. O'Rourke, the silver-spoon wisenheimer type who eats dope and flips boogers at the Establishment before being absorbed into his predestined life of privilege. The *'poon* exists today as a wretched husk of its former self, a trite diversion for toilet-bound stockbrokers nursing hemorrhoids.

But back in its prime, Doug Kenney was the *National Lampoon*'s gilded leprechaun, the mag's co-founder whose one-shot projects such as the *1964 High School Yearbook Parody* sold



over a million copies. A *Lampoon* radio show exposed national audiences to such future *Saturday Night Live* fixtures as John Belushi and Chevy Chase.

When Kenney split from the *Lampoon* in the mid-seventies, taking with him severance pay of nearly three million bucks, he went on to co-author *Animal House,* which grossed more than all previous filmic comedies. Kenney soon matched his dinosaurian success with a typically debauched Hollywood lifestyle: fistfights with studio execs, drunken press conferences, and an appetite for cocaine which led associates to believe that Doug could snort up all of Antarctica. He followed *Animal House* with *Caddyshack,* a strip of celluloid sewage which, though mildly successful, left a few nicks in Doug's patina of invincibility. His coke-fueled persecution complex was becoming well-known around Hollywood, and Kenney started making mordant references to his alleged suicide attempts: "You have to learn to roll with the bullets."

At Chevy Chase's prodding, Doug agreed to fly to Hawaii in August, 1980, for rest, relaxation, and coke detox. After about a week of abstinence, Doug was phoning his dealer for sandbags of the stuff. Both Kenney's fiancée and Chase eventually flew back to the mainland to meet obligations, leaving Doug buzzing solo around Kauai like a gnat on helium. After a few days of two-hundred-mile-an-hour introspection, Kenney could take no more. He wrote a short note, scribbled "I love you" on his bathroom mirror with a soap bar, and drove his Jeep to a scenic bluff. He purposely walked past signs warning of danger, trod through some ankle-choking shrubbery, stepped onto a rocky escarpment, and flung his preppie physique down onto the salt-sprayed boulders. He remains, to borrow a phrase popularized by his good friend Chevy, critically dead.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpt):

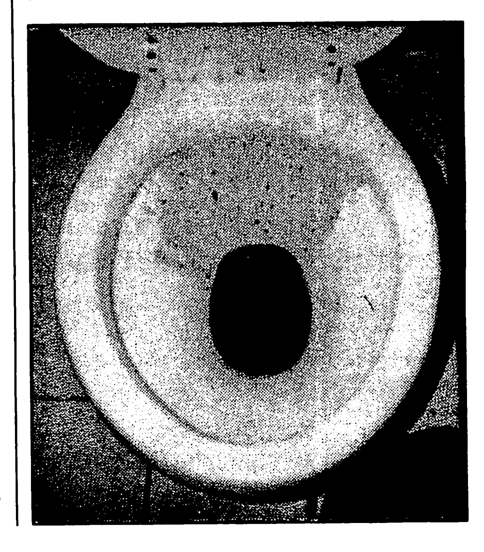
These are some of the happiest days I've ever ignored.

#47
Thomas Kenney
THE WAY OF ALL TURDS

Scientists in the Middle Ages believed in spontaneous generation, a hypothesis which stated that living matter arose from inert material. As proof, they cited their observation that flies sprouted from shit. If they had microscopes, they would have seen fly eggs nestling within the warm, mushy feces, a discovery which seemingly disproved their contention. However, spontaneous generation can't be entirely discounted. Inanimate manure has always nurtured living plant matter, which feeds higher vertebrates, who eventually die and revert back to mulch. The biblical utterance, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," might ring truer had the word 'dust' been substituted with 'shit.'

If one were to anthropomorphize a city such as New York, its digestive system would surely be its sewers, the thoroughfares through which shit flows. Sewers process a staggering amount of sickening bilge, the matted hair, vomit, menstrual blood, jellied mucus, aborted fetuses, fermented sperm, and water-logged guano of an entire metropolis.

Amid the torrid Manhattan July of 1891, Thomas Kenney decided to flush himself out of existence. Wearing a threadbare suit and black derby, he was spotted exiting a liquor store at 26th and Third. He gazed up and down the block, walked into the middle of the road, and pried open a manhole cover. Apparently indecisive, he let go of the cover, which loudly clanged as Kenney disappeared back into the liquor shop. Roughly five minutes passed before he returned into the street, lifted the steel cover yet again, and once more let it drop, walking



back inside. Within another five minutes he was again standing over the open manhole. "Here she goes," he bellowed, plopping down the hole like a five-and-a-half-foot whale turd.

Kenney's swollen blue body was found floating in the East River three days after his suicide. His face had been half-eaten by rats. Ironically, Kenney had been known as an expert lifesaver who had snatched many would-be drowning victims from the East River's maws. Although he was dead, he gave life back to the city's bowels by providing nutrients to its rodent community. The shit never goes away, it just gets recycled.

#48 The Kevorkian Suicides

CAPTAIN JACK WILL HELP YA DIE TONIGHT

Death is Jack Kevorkian's business, and business is good. But like any pioneer, he has his detractors. He has been reviled as a "serial mercy killer" and "Jeffrey Dahmer in a lab coat." His foes suggest that he's a bit too libidinous about the whole death experience, and they cite his history of near-monomaniacal death-absorption to buttress their contention. They point to his 1958 ejection from the University of Michigan, where he argued that Death Row prisoners should be knocked unconscious and experimented upon, that their executed bodies would be fertile ground for post-mortem organ harvesting. His enemies call attention to the part-time painter's early-sixties exhibit entitled "Art is Bunk," where an original Kevorkian work called "Genocide" featured a frame smeared with blood drawn from a blood bank. The anti-Kevorkian army scorns some of his other pet projects, such as injecting live patients with blood drawn from fresh corpses and his practice of running to the hospital beds of newly dead patients and photographing their eyes to see if he could gauge precisely when they died.

In his defense, the Michigan physician argues that his role is beneficent, preferring the moniker "Dr. Life" to his better-known appellation. He rightly states that not all historical cultures have been as suicide-phobic as our current one. And he'd find millions of Americans who agree with his basic premise, that a dignified, self-directed death is boundlessly preferable to a slow, putrefactive one.

Born sixty-five years ago in Pontiac, Michigan, Dr. Jack says he first embraced euthanasia as a medical student, when he witnessed terminal patients' pitiful entreaties for a quick, merciful end. He quit practicing medicine in 1988 in order to pursue his "long-range goal of terminal experimentation." He printed business cards which read, "Jack Kevorkian, M.D., Bioethics and Obitiatry [a word of his own coinage, meaning 'death doctoring']." He placed classified ads which stated, "DOCTOR CONSULTANT—for the terminally ill who wish to die w/dignity." But it was an odd little ad he attempted to place in a medical journal, an ad which the journal rejected, which set him on the path toward infamy.

The ad touted a machine Kevorkian had labeled the "Mercitron," a device he reportedly constructed for less than thirty dollars from materials purchased at flea markets. There wasn't much to it—a frame made of aluminum scrap, some plastic tubing, three intravenous bottles, and a motor taken from a toy car—but the Mercitron was unique in that it enabled people to kill themselves. It worked like this: A doctor injects the patient with a harmless saline solution running from the first bottle into the patient's bloodstream. Then, tugging on the first of two strings attached to their fingers, the patient opens the flow from the second bottle, which contains the sedative sodium pentothal. The sedative renders the patient unconscious within thirty seconds, causing his or her arm to fall. When their arm falls, it pulls a string which triggers the third bottle, containing a lethal dose of potassium chloride. The patient is dead within six minutes. Dr. Kevorkian calls his Mercitron a "benevolent monster." Most everyone else calls it a "suicide machine."

Controversy generated by the suicide machine hastened an appearance on the *Donahue* show, after which Kevorkian was deluged with requests from would-be suicides worldwide. Kevorkian established strict criteria for his applicants. First, he required them to furnish medical proof that they are terminally ill (although, his opponents are quick to point out, not imminently terminal). Second, a patient's family members must assent to the procedure. Third, a thorough psychiatric evaluation must be made, discounting any instances where the patient's problems are deemed to be primarily mental. Finally, once having made the decision, a patient is not permitted to backtrack; if they do, their case is dropped from consideration.

The first human to sample the Mercitron's deathly tendrils was Janet Adkins, an Alzheimer's patient from Portland, Oregon. After a fruitless search for a private home in which to conduct his first assisted suicide, Kevorkian resurrected his



The fun-lovin' doc, surrounded by ten of his patients (clockwise from top row): Janet Adkins, Marjorie Wantz, Sherry Miller, Lois Hawes, Catherine Andreyev, Jack Miller, Stanley Ball, Hugh Gale, Jonathan Grenz, and Martha Ruwart.

crotchety 1968 Volkswagen van, vacuuming it and sewing a set of rear-window curtains for the occasion. Adkins, who had played tennis a few days previously but dreaded a progressive loss of mental acuity, flew with her husband to Michigan. On June 4, 1990, while her husband stayed at a motel, she drove with Kevorkian's two sisters to some campgrounds outside Detroit where the doctor had parked his van. Things went far from smoothly—while making preparations, Kevorkian spilled his barbiturate solution, requiring Adkins to wait two-and-a-half hours while he rushed home to get more. After returning, it took him five pokes into Adkins's arm before the needle took. On the fifth try, as Adkins pulled the switch and the sedative entered her bloodstream, she said, "Thank you, thank you."

"Have a nice trip," Kevorkian replied.

The media went apeshit over the next few days, interviewing Kevorkian around the clock. Michigan authorities impounded the Mercitron. Four days after Adkins's death, a judge prohibited Kevorkian from using the machine again, proclaiming, "It's the end of Dr. K. helping patients die." Five months later, Kevorkian's medical license was suspended. In December, 1990, he was charged with murdering Adkins. The charges were later dropped.

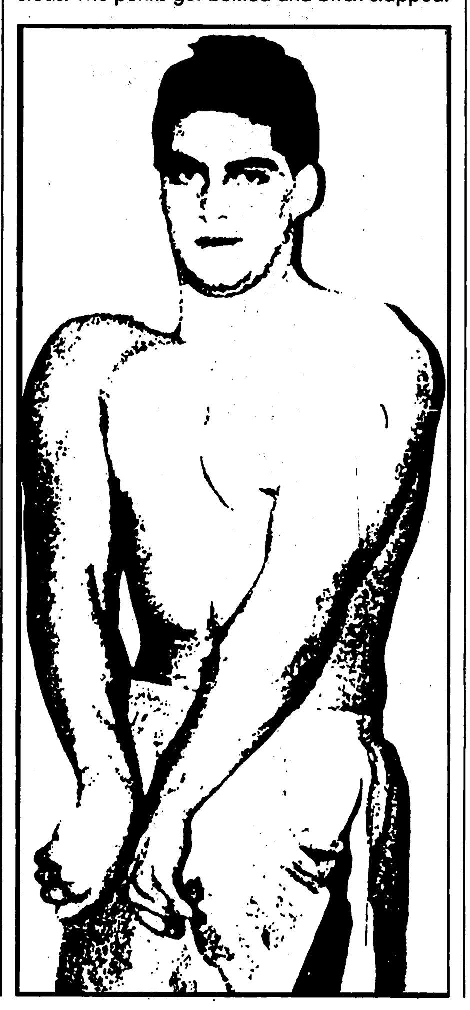
Another ten months would pass before Kevorkian would again perform an assisted suicide, and this time it was two in one day. Marjorie Wantz, fifty-eight, was a Michigan trailer-park resident who awoke neighbors at night with her shrieking caused by a painful genital disorder. She had failed in two previous suicide attempts. Sherry Miller, forty-three, suffered from multiple sclerosis. Both women had reportedly been petitioning Kevorkian for two years, and the doctor, unsure of how long he would remain a free man, decided that both should do it during the same session. The women, with Kevorkian present, made videotapes where they detailed their suicidal intentions. On October 23, 1991, they drove to an appointed cabin in the Bald Mountain Recreation Area north of Detroit. As with Adkins, they were forced to wait for hours while a bumbling Dr. Kevorkian had to rush home and fetch some forgotten equipment. Wantz went first via a reconstituted Mercitron, but Miller, whose veins were unreceptive to four jabs with a needle, was the first of Kevorkian's patients to die by inhaling carbon monoxide through a mask. After both suicides were completed, Kevorkian phoned the police. He was again charged with murder, and the charges were again dismissed.

Stripped of his medical license and thus unable to obtain potassium chloride, Kevorkian used his carbon-monoxide contraption in all subsequent assisted suicides. Multiple-sclerosis patient Susan Williams huffed smog on May 15, 1992; Lois Hawes, suffering from lung cancer, sucked exhaust on September 25; breast-cancer patient Catherine Andreyev inhaled a fatal amount of the sooty stuff nearly two months later. Hours after the two-for-the-price-of-one suicides of Marguerite Tate (Lou Gehrig's disease) and Marcella Lawrence (emphysema), Michigan passed a law banning assisted suicide, to take effect on April 1, 1993. Kevorkian, hearing the clock ticking, stepped on the gas. On January 20, bone-cancer victim Jack Elmer Miller toked on mucho monoxide. In February, six more of Kevorkian's incurables were to breathe their last: Stanley Ball (pancreatic cancer); Mary Biernat (breast cancer); Elaine Goldbaum (M.S.); Hugh Gale (emphysema); Jonathan Grenz (throat cancer); and Martha Ruwart (intestinal/ovarian cancer). On February 26, eight days after Grenz and Ruwart's suicides, Michigan's anti-suicide bill was made immediately effective. Kevorkian waited nearly three months to test the law, overseeing lung-and-bone cancer victim Ron Mansur's smog party on May 16, 1993.

The world, divided on whether he's an angel or a pariah, joyously awaits his next step. At *ANSWER Me!*, we tend to see him as a hero. In our book, his only sin was appearing on *Donahue*.



A high school's corridors are like a cellblock, a dark, savage jungle composed of punks and studs. The punks get bullied and bitch-slapped.



They have cafeteria food thrown at them. They get hoisted by the back seat of their drawers, thrown into the showers, and gang-raped by hooting cockswains.

Mike Keys was tired of being a punk. He bought a set of weights and began methodically pumping his way from runty beanpole to meat-packin' man. Cruising gyms around the town of Mount Clemens, Michigan, he learned to love the bright lights and shiny steel, the homoerotic allure of testicle sweat. Weights beefed him up somewhat, but Mike craved more power, the ability to crack walnuts with his biceps.

He turned to steroids. It began with tablets, but he was soon getting testosterone-filled spikes jammed into his veins. Muscle tissue swiftly trash-compacted itself onto his spindly frame. Mike became swollen like a life raft, anabolically bloated, a broad-shouldered billy goat bucking through school seeking to rut the nearest nanny. He was toolin'.

Steroids, however, imbue the addict with a blast-furnace personality. Mike, too, became prone to chemical conniptions, the unblinking rage of a Goad. His friends were alarmed at the once-docile seventeen-year-old's new-found explosiveness. On a nippy day just before Christmas in 1988, Mike became peeved with a rather picayune problem: The weather had frozen his car door's lock. Mike was able to bench-press slag heaps of steel, but he couldn't pop the goddamned door open. He hurried into the warmth of his weight room, lifted a .22-caliber rifle, and pumped some "iron" into his head. A few hours later, his father discovered Mike's buffed-out corpse sprawled next to his weights. His son had plenty of meat, but the motion was gone.

#50
David Koresh & Friends
WHAT CAN A POOR BOY DO 'CEPT TO SING FOR A ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND, DRIVE A CAMARO, LEAD A RELIGIOUS CULT, STOCKPILE ASSAULT WEAPONS, AND GUIDE HIS FOLLOWERS INTO A BLAZING APOCALYPSE?

"If the Bible is true, then I'm Christ," said David Koresh to his fellow cultists, who hung onto every word of the well-hung holy man's harangue. "But so what? Look at two thousand years ago. What's so great about being Christ? A man nailed to the cross. A man acquainted with grief. You know, being Christ ain't nothing."

At the risk of sounding disrespectful, it *does* have its perks. How else but by becoming Christ can a boy named Vernon Howell, a ninth-grade dropout with a learning disability, snag a boss 427 black Camaro, all the beer he can drink, and more PUSSY than he could shake his divine rod at? Never far from his electric guitar, the would-be rock star sold himself as Jesus-with-a-twist: He would save the world from sin, but only by sticking his own head up the wide brown ass of iniquity and sniffing around. He would become, as he told his toadies, "a sinner without equal.... Now what better sinner can know a



sinner than a godly sinner? Huh?"

Makin' whoopee was his sin of choice. In order to assure that the seed for his new holy nation was of the proper lineage, Koresh (the Hebrew transliteration of Persia's King Cyrus) forbade his male disciples from having sex with female cultists. He also prohibited them from masturbating and even from changing baby girls' diapers lest their demon lust be stirred. Instead of having sex with the cult's other males, Koresh commanded his brides of Christ to come straight to papa. "To lie with me is to lie with God," he rationalized. "To bear a child with me is the greatest gift a woman can give her God. I am Jesus Christ returned with a big dick. I will sleep with your wife, and I will rate her on God's scale. All women want to sleep with God. I took a thirteen-year-old girl. She was trembling and afraid. Her heart was pounding like a hunted, scared animal. That's how all women sound when they make love to me for the first time." Big Dave fucked them all, mothers and daughters, eighty-year-olds down to preteens. His blessed bone sired at least seven, and perhaps as many as fifteen, mini-Koreshes.

And when those little buggers misbehaved, they were hauled off to the "spanking room," where Yahweh's righteousness was meted out with a paddle inscribed, "IT IS WRITTEN." Older folks who strayed also received the paddle. If they were especially naughty, they were forced to submerge themselves in a waste-filled cesspool and then forbidden to bathe. People sometimes had to learn the hard way that sin stinks.

Koresh had assumed sovereignty over the Branch Davidians—an offshoot of the Seventh-Day Adventists that focuses on the book of Revelation and dates back to the 1930s—during a 1987 gun battle with rival cultists. And if there was one thing he liked more than a moist gash or a cold brew, it was a well-oiled assault rifle. In the midst of his Bible lessons, which sometimes lasted fifteen hours, he would pass his personal AK-47 among his followers and admonish them to touch it. It was rumored that he had stashed a million rounds of ammo within his military-style compound on the wind-swept central Texas prairie. There were also intelligence reports that the cult owned two .50-caliber machine guns, a pair of "Street-Sweeper" shotguns, sixty handguns, twenty-six M-1 rifles, forty-four AK-47s, and one hundred and twenty-three AR-15/M-16s. In the seventeen months preceding February, 1993, the Branch Davidians had spent nearly two hundred thousand dollars to arm the seventy-seven-acre estate Koresh dubbed "Ranch Apocalypse." Girding himself for the battle of Armageddon—which, inexplicably, had switched its playing field from the Middle East to Waco, Texas—Koresh trained twenty or so "Mighty Men" as a Waffen-SS for the Lamb of God. The Mighty Men slept with guns at their bedsides and sometimes doled out beatings to the disobedient. Beyond Koresh's elite corps, all adult cultists were required to train with rifles, and even the children were obliged to watch endless Vietnam movies with the understanding that they were "training films."

Finally, on February 28, 1993, Satan came a-knockin'. Roughly a hundred Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agents approached the compound to deliver arrest warrants for weapons violations. Various sources had led them to believe that Koresh was hoarding supplies with which he could manufacture hand grenades and convert his assault rifles into machine guns. However, the omniscient Lamb was tipped off to the raid. He told his flunkies that "the Assyrians are coming" and instructed them to man their stations. When the ATF soldiers expressed their intentions to enter the compound, they were met with gunfire resembling a plague of locusts. During a forty-five-minute gunfight, four agents died and fifteen more were injured. Six cultists were killed. Koresh reportedly received a bullet wound to his abdomen.

With dead Davidian bodies slowly rotting inside the compound, the standoff began. Deprived of electricity and running water, cult members supped from mountains of K rations. Unable to use their toilets, they tossed their anointed droppings out the front door. Koresh, though, was still able to plug his guitar into emergency generators and launch into one of his eschatological jam sessions. On March 2, he threatened to strap himself with grenades, stroll out of the building, and blow himself up in front of TV cameras. After kissing the Koresh kids goodbye, he suddenly backed out of his brilliant plan.

Around the same time, he offered to surrender if officials would broadcast his hour-long taped message on local radio. When it was broadcast, he suddenly reneged, explaining that God had told him to stay put. Later in March, he said he'd end the stalemate if he'd be allowed to preach to his believers while in jail. In a hand-delivered letter, the FBI conceded. Koresh reportedly balled up the letter and threw it away. He had allegedly expressed to certain operatives his deathly fear of having his sacred buttocks reamed by jailhouse thugs.

The exasperated feds began employing psywar tactics such as beaming high-intensity floodlights into the compound at night and blasting mega-decibel recordings of dentist's drills, Mitch Miller tunes, Tibetan chants, and the shrieks of rabbits being slaughtered. In early April, Koresh promised that the cult would surrender after they celebrated Passover. Once again, he broke his promise. He then vowed to break the impasse after he completed a manuscript on the seven seals of Revelation. But the epistles he sent to government officials on April 10 and 11 indicate he was primed for a showdown. "My seven thunders are about to be revealed," he warned in a missive signed "Yahweh Koresh." He predicted an earthquake and flood around Lake Waco and advised the armies assembled against him to "Fear me, for I have you in my snare."

After more than seven weeks of enduring such bullshit grandstanding, the feds decided it was time to move in on the stubbly messiah. At five-fifty-five a.m. on April 19, they phoned Koresh's top aide and warned that specially equipped tanks were approaching and would soon be squirting tear gas into the compound. The aide responded by ripping the phone off the wall and throwing it out the front window. Within minutes, an M-60 tank was ramming huge holes in the compound walls. Cultists answered with a quick blast of gunfire and then scrambled to put on their gas masks. Throughout most of the morning, the federal tanks rammed and gassed, gassed and rammed. The Davidians, inured to the siege mentality, reportedly went calmly about their chores while sheetrock fell from the walls.

SUICIDE

Around five minutes after twelve, a puff of smoke appeared above Ranch Apocalypse. One FBI agent testified that he saw someone inside the building cupping his hands as if lighting a fire. After an explosion, the grounds were engulfed in an unholy ball of flame. Although officials expected cultists to stream from the building, only a few did, and even those resisted attempts to save them. Within a half-hour, all that remained of the giant complex was a small concrete bunker. Eerily, the Branch Davidian flag still flapped atop it. The whole scene recalled the passage in Revelation where there was "silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" after the seventh seal was opened, followed by "fire mingled with blood."

It would take officials weeks to wade through the ashes, the charred bones, the smell of dead fanatics. Some of the carcasses had been burned so badly, their faces were reduced to powder. An original body count of eighty-six was later downscaled to seventy-two and then up to ninety-six, although officials conceded that some of the bodies could have escaped detection because they were nothing more than dust. There were whispers that the Mighty Men had injected the cult's children with poison and shot adults who had tried to escape. Forensic analysis revealed that several of the dead showed evidence of bullet wounds to the skull. Among those that did was the skull of David Koresh, who at thirty-three died at the same age as Jesus.

Conspiracy theorists will squabble well into the next century about what actually happened at Rancho Koresho. The FBI claims to have aerial evidence that three separate fires were lit in the compound within a two-minute period. Arson investigators concluded that the fires were "intentionally set." Nine cult members survived, with most of them giving independent accounts that a federal tank had tipped over a kerosene lantern, which in turn ignited haystacks the cult was using for barricades. Whatever the truth is, Koresh's actions had until that point betokened a strong suicidal urge. The latest word is that isolated pockets of Davidians nationwide are regrouping in anticipation of Koresh's feedback-drenched return from the heavens.



We all spend our lives reading from a procession of geological and social teleprompters. Withdraw all human interaction, remove the sun, moon, and all temperature fluctuations, and we rapidly lose our way. Like a talk-show host confronted with technical difficulties, we are forced to ad-lib ourselves out of a big black vacuum.



When Veronique Le Guen volunteered for a scientific experiment requiring her to spend an indefinite period alone in a cave two hundred and sixty-two feet beneath the ground, she probably didn't bargain that a part of her soul would never emerge from the darkness. She knew she'd be aiding sensory-deprivation research, but she more than likely had her sights set on a world record and the resultant publicity. On August 10, 1988, the thirty-two-year-old Frenchwoman plunged down the limestone-coated throat of the Valat-Nègre cavern into a small grotto where she'd spend the next hundred and eleven days. Into the fifty-degree environment she brought canned food, bottled water, nine hundred books, and a stuffed animal. A Radio Shack's worth of wires were pasted on her head and torso to monitor bodily functions. She ran through daily handwriting and motor-coordination tests. Via a pulley, she sent piss, blood, and saliva samples up to ground level. For nearly four months, she was a Gallic mole-woman cocooned in a dank, refrigerated uterus.

Little by little, and then in great leaps, her normal bodily rhythms were knocked off-kilter. She developed a warped sleep cycle, on some "days" spending forty waking hours followed by thirty-four hours snoozing. She took one eighteen-hour "nap" she perceived as lasting only minutes.

Diary entries reveal a mind that was gradually losing its grip: "I feel calm, too calm. I feel the sort of lucidity that fills your soul just after—or is it just before?—a great catastrophe.... My only horizon is darkness, my sky, emptiness. I am buried alive, trapped in an inhuman world.... I am not here, but I am analyzing myself all the same. I feel evil all around me. This cave doesn't have any meaning

anymore. My soul is dissolving into the humidity. I let myself slide into unreality. Nothing is true anymore. I have a feeling that a terrible evil has gotten hold of me: insanity."

When she finally surfaced on November 29 into a hailstorm of press-camera flashbulbs, she had broken the world's record for female cave-divers. But she was never to fully mesh with the realm of sunlight and other humans, a fact she noted in her book, *Alone at the Bottom of the Abyss.* Her sleep cycle was forever wrecked. Her friends and relatives said she seemed emotionally adrift. In a radio interview on January 15, 1990, she spoke of an internal "time bomb." Two days later, she took an overdose of barbiturates in a truck parked on a Paris street. Down in that cave, Veronique had brushed up against a vast, immovable blackness, a great sleepy void to which she finally yielded.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Addressed to her husband):
The ten years of happiness I spent with you are worth an entire lifetime, but my life is over. I don't have anything left to do on this earth. I'm afraid of death, but I'm even more afraid of life. Forgive me. You are free. Carry on. I love you horribly.

#52
Diane Linkletter
KIDS DO THE DARNDEST THINGS ON ACID

Art Linkletter was the voice of reactionary reason back in the turbulent sixties, the silent majority's super-mellow father confessor. He was the easygoing paternal type who calls you into his den, fragrant with rum-and-maple pipe tobacco, and shows you his model-ship collection. He had no discernible talent apart from a certain homespun cuddliness, but it was enough to make him a TV superstar. He was a warm teddy bear of a man, someone whose mildly rising flatulence was as reassuring as the smell of butter cookies baking in the oven.

So when his daughter Diane's LSD-crazed suicide hit the news, Art must have felt like plucking out his eyeballs and hiding them in the cupboard. It was all the more tragic because Diane, a young Caucasian girl with a heart as wide as the big blue sky, a girl ready to snuggle puppies, was a mere damsel of twenty. We've all heard third-hand accounts of the underground scene, particularly the notorious acid "flash-back," where microscopic, fire-breathing winged Buddhas tear at your genitals and rummage through your record collection, leaving everything out of alphabetical order. Ever since she experimented with LSD in the spring of 1969—an act she *deeply regretted* and admitted to her father was nothing short of *stupid*—Diane had been rattled with flash-backs, each one rolling over her like an earthquake's aftershocks. On October 4, 1969, the Big One hit. Diane, her eyes two spinning



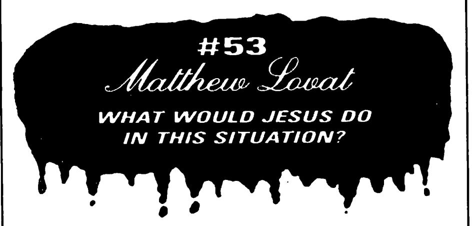
peppermint candies, her perky bouffant hairdo a thicket of worms, jumped from the window of her tenth-story Hollywood apartment.

Ironically, Art was at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, all set to deliver a lecture on "Our Permissive, Affluent Society," when he received word of Diane's death plunge. He flew home and marshaled the Linkletters together. The family decided that it would best serve the nation's interests if they were honest about what drove their little bumpkin to kill herself. They knew there was a stigma attached to the fact that drugs had touched their family, but their testimony might be able to steer some misguided youngster away from the evil microdot.

"I immersed myself in the drug scene," Art was to write in a nakedly confessional article for *Good Housekeeping.* "... I'm told that a shot of 'speed' can be like a full body orgasm." Art came to realize that drug experimentation was a normal—but potentially lethal—part of adolescent curiosity: "So a bunch of them climb into a car with a few joints they bought from an older kid and they hide out just as you and I used to do to smoke corn silk behind the barn." Art, you *delinquent!* He concluded that Diane's belly-flop onto concrete wasn't technically a suicide—she "had been murdered by drugs."



On a Wednesday night in August, 1971, Connecticut resident Robert Boutin, twenty, confessed to his mom that he had taken LSD "five or six times over the period of four months" and was terrified about its possible long-term effects. A few hours later, he dynamited himself.



Christianity is a religion custom-made for self-hatred, preaching that our innate filthiness is the only thing which caught God's fancy in the first place. It is the masochist's ultimate S&M projection, with the world ruled by a cruel master who laughs at his slaves' piteous cries for mercy. To become worthy before such a pure, humorless God, one must render oneself worthless. A good Christian must mortify the flesh, flog his ego, lower himself to grovel amid the maggots. Deeply ashamed of their bodily functions, suspicious of their instincts, good Christians must squelch pleasure at every turn. The worse one feels, the better it is. Christians are humble shit-eaters who rip out their hair and slap themselves in the face in the hopes that it will please their master. They'll kneel on wooden planks, mumbling prayers until their knees bleed. In an advanced stage of the disease, they'll go Christ one better and crucify themselves.

Matthew Lovat was a very, *very* good Christian. The Italian peasant loved Jesus so much, he sliced off his own balls in a spurt of religious passion. The townsfolk of Casale, apparently not as strong in their faith, subsequently banned Matthew from entering the local church. He relocated to Venice, where he became a shoemaker. In 1799, using the tools of his trade, he fashioned a wooden cross from his bed frame. He took up his cross and carried it into the street, where he began nailing his left foot into the wood. A group of reprobates stopped him from going further. A prophet without honor in Venice, Matthew returned to Casale.

Over the next three years, he stubbornly built another crucifix. Toiling away in a cramped third-story apartment, he fastened a rope on top of his new cross and tied the loose end to a beam in the ceiling. Uncertain whether the cross would bear his weight even if he were nailed to it, he placed it within a net. He then moved the foot of the cross near the edge of his windowsill so it pointed out toward the street.



One morning in 1802, he placed a crown of thorns around his head, securing it deep enough to draw blood. Naked except for a small handkerchief serving as a loincloth, he entered the net and nailed his feet to the base of the cross. He then tied his waist to the shaft. As a final touch before hurling himself out over the street, he gouged himself in the side with a shoemaker's tool, simulating Christ's spear wound. With his hands, he pushed the cross through his open window, and it lurched out over the street, with Lovat attached, suspended by the rope he had tied to the ceiling. Foreseeing difficulty, he had already made two holes in the horizontal beam where his arms were to be nailed. He successfully hammered his right arm into the wood, but although he had taken the precaution of driving a nail through his left palm, he was unable to push it into the cross.

Gazing upward at the bizarre performance, townsfolk were stupefied. A few of them regained their composure long enough to rush up three flights and pull Lovat back into his bedroom. When doctors later asked him the reason for his attempted self-crucifixion, his pious response was, "The pride of man must be mortified; it must expire on the cross." Reluctant to give him a third chance, authorities institutionalized Lovat. In the grand tradition of Christ, who fasted forty days and forty nights, Lovat starved himself to death.



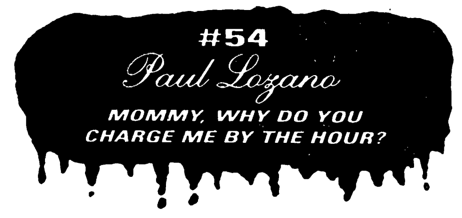
Arthur A. McDonald of Superior, Wisconsin, snapped two pictures of himself tied to a giant blue-and-red cross in his parlor before hanging himself with a silk noose in July, 1921. A friend explained that McDonald wished to be seen as "the savior of the I.W.W. [Industrial Workers of the World]."



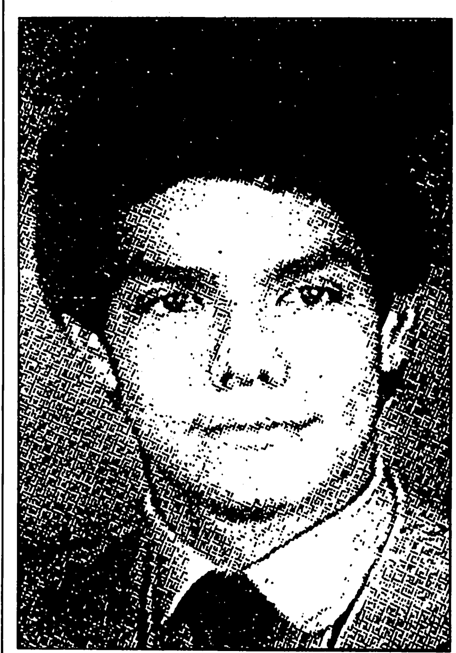
Leoni Stuvenal of Bayonne, New Jersey, her power of logic said to be "dethroned by religious studies," sought to mimic Christ in July, 1889. She stripped naked and hammered some hat pins through one hand and a foot, attaching herself to a door. She survived and shuffled off to Bellevue.



In the Easter season of 1892, a German named Puschke tied his feet together, nailed them into the ground, drove a nail through his left hand and into the dirt, then stabbed himself repeatedly in the chest with his right hand. He survived.



Make no mistake about it—psychiatrists are more contemptible than priests, lawyers, politicians, and corporate executives, perhaps even performance artists. With their smug insistence that they know what's good for you far better than you do, that any objections you might have are simply a desperate gesture of guilt transference, they act as cult leaders in a two-member cult. The only difference is that cult leaders aren't legally empowered to prescribe Thorazine. To give someone power over another person's fragile psyche is akin to placing a buzzard over a dead body and saying, "Watch this for me, will ya?" First thing we do, let's kill all the psychiatrists.



Having grown up as the son of a Hispanic construction contractor, Paul Lozano felt socially displaced at Harvard Medical School. Seeking to lessen his anguish, he began weekly therapy sessions with a therapist named Margaret Bean-Bayog in July, 1986. "School is fine," he allegedly told her, "but quite sad." Bean-Bayog terminated Lozano as a patient in June, 1990, reportedly telling Paul's father: "Your son is eighty percent suicidal. You know this runs in the family. He'll probably kill himself. I've done all I can for him." Ten months later, after showering and sprinkling himself with cologne, Paul sat down at his desk in front of some open medical books. Into his arm he stuck a needle filled with what he knew was enough cocaine to kill him. Dr. Bean-Bayog's prediction had come true.

When sharp questions were raised concerning the admittedly "unique" method she had used to treat her patient, the therapist replied that "Mr. Lozano was the most severely mentally ill and suicidal" person ever placed under her care, someone who had confided to her about "his problems with alcohol and drug abuse, his sociopathic symptoms, such as lying, stealing, and cheating, and his overwhelming feelings of anxiety and rage." She hinted that Lozano had been subject to emotional, physical, and possibly even sexual abuse as a child. Over the course of his treatment, she had him hospitalized several times, at one point refusing to tell his parents where she had sent him.

But Lozano's family, and even one of Bean-Bayog's colleagues, denied that Paul suffered from any severe emotional distress until he started therapy. They pointed to the psychiatrist's odd therapeutic technique, one in which she played an understanding mother to Paul's needy little boy. She gave him a stuffed animal, kiddie books, and flash cards, one of which read, "I'm your mom and I love you and you love me very, very much. Say that ten times." In her notes, she expressed sorrow over childhood abuse she said Lozano had suffered: "I am in a heap, sweating and disheveled, and so sad I can't feel any boundaries to it.... So this is what they did to you.... [I feel] sad, terribly sad, for the baby, the boy, the eight-year-old boy." During the period in which Paul was under Bean-Bayog's care, Lozano's sister sensed that he was regressing, evidenced by an itty-bitty baby voice and even a childlike gait.

Far more disturbing were allegations of a sexual relationship between doctor and patient. One of the flash cards Bean-Bayog had given Lozano reportedly read, "I'm going to miss so many things about you, the closeness and the need and the phenomenal sex." Lozano allegedly told other psychiatrists that he and Bean-Bayog had slept together and that during certain counseling sessions, the doctor played with her pussy while he watched. Bean-Bayog was also said to have written a steamy, fifty-five-page sex rant which was found in Lozano's apartment. In her defense, she claimed that Paul had purloined the pornographic epistle.

SUICIDE

Toward the end of their psychoanalytic relationship, when Lozano sensed that Bean-Bayog was about to cut him loose, he reportedly asked her, "Do you know what it is like to hate your mother?" After their breakup, Lozano started seeing a therapist named Barry Gault, who recalls him clutching his stuffed bear and cooing, "I miss Margaret." After a pause, he mewled, "I'm hearing her voice again."

"What is the voice telling you?" Gault asked.

"She's telling me to kill myself," Lozano replied. Since Bean-Bayog surrendered her license to avoid an impending court trial, her guilt or innocence in Paul Lozano's suicide will probably never be legally determined. But Paul was certain that the voice in his head was Margaret's. And he did what every good little baby boy does. He listened to his mommy.



The emotional bond between a mother and her daughter is one of the most special things in nature. A loving mom will gently instruct her little girl about the rigors of menstruation, the



virtues of an intact hymen, and the wily maneuvers of wolflike males. She'll offer advice on how to keep it clean "down there." She'll sew the hem of her little bobbysoxer's prom gown and help her select a suitable floral arrangement. She'll do everything in her power to ensure that her precious debutante is presented to the world in the most auspicious manner possible, that she faces a future as bright as an afternoon sun on a chrome-plated bumper.

So when Tina Mancini's mother forced her seventeen-year-old girl to swing her jugs around in a series of Florida titty bars, it must have come as a bit of a letdown to young Tina. Jiggling her cans in front of drooling old retirees probably wasn't her idea of a coming-out party. Her mother, Theresa Jackson, had forged Tina's birth certificate in order for the girl to dance "legally." Jackson even had the gall to sponge off Tina's income for her own living expenses.

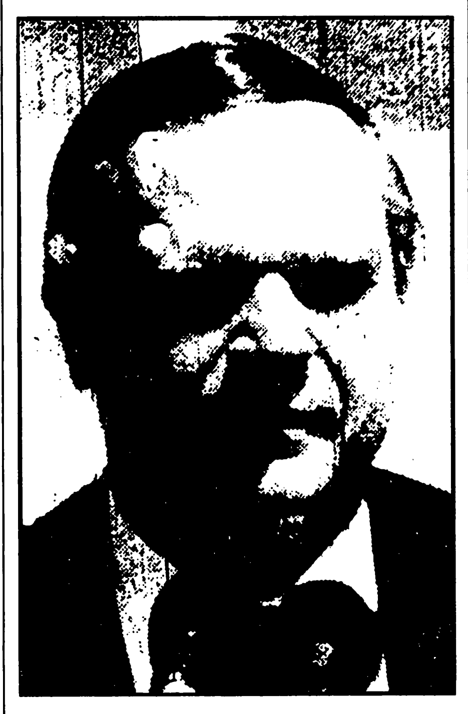
On March 24, 1986, three months after the Fort Lauderdale teen had begun whisking her hooters around like a pair of ostrich eggs for the delight of tipsy lechers, she creamed her brains with one shot from mom's .357 Magnum. In an unprecedented trial, Jackson was charged with creating an environment which drove Tina to kill herself. Jackson's son Rico, himself a stripper, was summoned to testify against his old lady, and the vision of Jackson's dick-swinging offspring on the witness stand obviously didn't help matters. The judge handed Jackson a one-year sentence. "I realize I probably made a lot of mistakes," Jackson told the judge while choking back tears. What could she have meant? Would things have gone better if she had trod the straight-and-narrow and forced her daughter to tongue old men's assholes at five bucks a pop?

#56
Donald Manes
STICK A KNIFE IN ME, I'M DONE

Queens is the most ordinary of New York's five boroughs, a humdrum spread of bricks and asphalt, dirty smokestacks and cruddy eighteen-wheelers hauling cheese out to Long Island. It's a thick-necked place, home to Archie Bunker and the Mets. Almost without exception, its denizens are forgettable shlumps.

But Queens also has a population greater than that of sixteen individual states, and with the tightly packed blue-collar citizenry come epic tales of graft and mob hits, two-fisted extortion and concrete boots.

For over twenty years, Donald Manes (pronounced "MAN-iss") was a high-muckety-muck in Queens Realpolitik. An unctuous little frog, a humpbacked troll with an oily comb-over, he cut deals and greased palms all the way to the borough presidency. Then one frozen night in January, 1986, as a city-wide bribery and corruption investigation was set to go public, Donald Manes felt his world crashing down on him like a truckload of Mafia cement. After slashing a wrist and ankle, he went for a weaving drive through some dark roads near La Guardia Airport and was finally stopped by police near Shea Stadium. He originally claimed to have been mugged but later retracted that statement and admitted he had cut himself. He resigned as borough president a month later.



On March 10, his supposed best friend accepted a plea bargain in return for testifying against Manes in connection with mail fraud and extortion. Three days later, while talking to his psychiatrist on a phone in his kitchen, Manes pulled out a fourteen-inch carving knife and shoved it deep within his chest, falling belly-up on the floor like a Thanksgiving turkey. A friend later called him "one so corrupt that he chose suicide rather than face the consequences of his crimes." Manes had spent his adult life thinking he had one hand in the cookie jar, only to find it was a sausage grinder instead.



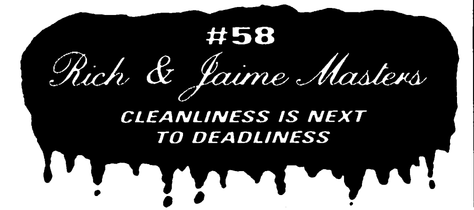
Faced with certain, imminent murder, one's choices in life are quickly whittled down to two: Either surrender your throat lamblike to your conqueror or deny him the satisfaction by killing yourself. Throughout history and in every place they wandered, the Hebrew people have shown a drastically lower suicide rate than their Gentile hosts. When they have committed suicide, particularly en masse, it has usually been in response to pogroms organized by their enemies. In twelfth-century England, rather than suffer at the hands of fanatical Christians, an estimated five hundred Jews killed themselves at once. Facing similar witch hunts in France over the next two centuries, hundreds more died in large-scale orgies of self-termination. Innumerable other Jewish people met a self-appointed end as the Spanish Inquisition's madness rolled through Europe.

A curious facet of these deaths is that they weren't suicides in the strictest sense. In keeping with the aforementioned cultural distaste for self-cessation, they were actually collaborative executions, with small teams of appointed killers slaying most of the victims, then each other, until the last remaining person had to take his own life. Consciously or not, they emulated the example set by Eleazar Ben Yair and his group of Zealots, who in 73 A.D. committed what might be the largest one-shot mass suicide in history. At a fortress named Masada, nestled on a rocky bluff thirteen hundred feet above the scorching Judean Desert, Eleazar's forces bravely withstood Roman onslaughts for four years.

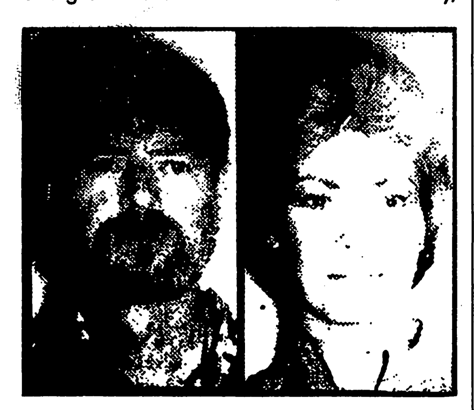
As fiercely as Eleazar defended Masada, he was outnumbered five-to-one by the Romans, who finally smashed through his outlying wall with a battering ram. Roman forces set fire to the wall and then retreated to their camp for the night, gearing up for a thundering slaughter come morning. Eleazar, fearing that the Romans would torture his men, schtup his women, and ship the kids off to slave camps, recommended mass suicide as a more desirable option. He delivered a spiel about how it was better to be judged by God than the Romans, but the crowd wasn't buying it. He then jabbered for a while

about the soul's immortality, how the body was merely a "weight" to be cast off, and the listeners swallowed it up like a bite-sized lump of halvah. In the manic wave which seized the fortress, each family's patriarch slashed the throats of his wife and children before baring his own gizzard for a ten-man execution squad. After tossing the corpses in a heap and torching them, the ten remaining warriors drew lots to see who would kill the other nine. When this was accomplished, the last remaining guy set the entire place ablaze and fell on his sword.

As the sun rose, the Romans, ready for a good rape-and-pillage fiesta, entered Masada only to find nine hundred and sixty burnt carcasses. It was so quiet, you could hear a shekel drop. The Romans let loose with war whoops, which drew the only survivors—two women and five children—out of a cave in which they'd been hiding. The women explained what had happened. Hmm—five thousand horny Romans, two broads. The historians aren't clear on the matter, but I'd lay good money that those two chicks had Latin sperm oozing out of their ears by nightfall.



It was an invigorating Rocky Mountain weekend in October, 1992, the sky a big blue wash bucket filled with disinfectant. Rich and Jaime Masters spent most of it fiddling around their maroon-and-green house near Denver. On Saturday,



Rich mowed the lawn while Jaime dusted, vacuumed, and generally spruced up their tri-level brick home. In their mailbox, they left a note advising the mailman to call the sheriff, along with a cellular phone and fifty dollars "for your trouble." With their blinds drawn, they fastidiously arranged their driver's licenses, wills, and a list of family members' phone numbers. Then, at some point between Sunday and Monday, they covered their U-shaped sofa with a shower curtain, a blanket, and a quilt. The middle-aged couple then sat down gently so as not to disturb their makeshift slipcovers. They each lifted a gun, both of which had undoubtedly been cleaned and oiled, pointed it to their heads while facing each other, and sent their frontal lobes a-flyin', trying as best they could under the circumstances not to make a mess.



For most of her adult life, Leanita McClain stewed like a big brown pot of prunes with



hatred for Chi-town's honkies. The first black person ever to ascend to the *Chicago Tribune*'s editorial board, she made a name for herself by writing articles that pulsated with race-baiting vituperation. A gifted scribe, she was adept at putting those lily-livered, needle-dicked, skinny-lipped, straight-haired, narrow-nosed, pig-skinned, no-chin, can't-dance cracker bastards back into the caves from whence they came. "How Chicago Taught Me to Hate Whites" was the title of an op-ed piece she wrote for the *Washington Post* on July 24, 1983. In the article, she detailed her frustration over a rancorous, racially charged Chicago mayoral election. She spoke disdainfully about hearing voices on the radio mention "'*the* blacks.'... It is the article that offends. The words are held out like a foul-smelling sock transported two-fingered at the end of an outstretched arm to the hamper while the nose is pinched shut. 'The blacks.' It would make me feel like machine-gunning every white face on the bus."

In her professional life, though, she was constantly forced to rub elbows with Mister Charley. She had risen from housing projects on the South Side to a powerful position on the Midwest's most influential paper and thus had to offer at least token politeness to the melanin-deficient. At parties, earnest Caucasians gathered around her as if she were a circus curiosity. "I am burdened daily with showing whites that blacks are people," she wrote in a 1980 guest piece for *Newsweek*. "I am, in the old vernacular, a credit to my race.... My brothers' keeper, and my sisters', though many of them have abandoned me because they think that I have abandoned them.... I assuage white guilt. I disprove black inadequacy and prove to my parents' generation that their patience was indeed a virtue."

But despite her bold proclamations of blackness, even her genetic makeup was indeterminate. She was what less sensitive folks would call a "high yella": light skin, green eyes, and a wispy puff of blonde in otherwise nappy hair. It was this uncomfortable sense of racial limbo, of straddling two worlds, which ultimately proved unbearable for McClain. In May, 1984, only two months after *Glamour* magazine named her one of America's "ten most outstanding working women," she ate a monster dose of amitriptyline and fell asleep for the last time. The whole thing leaves us feeling sad. *Now* who's going to make Chicago's whites feel guilty?

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpt):

...Happiness is a private club that will not let me enter.... Please let me go the way I choose. Do not try to pull me back into this world. I will never live long enough to see my people free, anyway.



It was 1931 in Mexico City, and Señor Medrano wanted to die so badly, he could taste it. He wanted to die the same way a fifteen-year-old boy wants a big pair of tits slapping him in the face. He craved death the same way a female prisoner at the end of a ten-year bid craves a thick, veiny donkey dick. He hungered for an end to his life the same way that Bill Clinton salivates over a Denny's all-you-can-eat special.

He tried to throw himself under an oncoming train. Someone physically restrained him. He tried shooting himself. The gun jammed. He tried inhaling kitchen gas. Family members rushed in and stopped him. He threw himself in a river. Someone pulled him out. He leapt from a roof. The fall didn't kill him, but he suffered a fatal heart attack while falling. That way, no future good Samaritans would get pasted in the face with Elmer's Glue while rescuing Medrano from a failed autoerotic asphyxiation.

HONORABLE MENTION

Tokyo resident Hiromasa Sato couldn't kill himself with cyanide. He couldn't kill himself by hanging, even after six attempts. He threw himself in front of trains on eight different occasions, surviving with nary a scratch. Hoping that the state would be able to execute him better than he could, he sought the death penalty by attempting to derail a train and kill some commuters. His scheme failed to work, and in December, 1949, Sato was brought before a judge, who ordered him to be institutionalized. "That's foolish," Sato told the judge. "I just wanted to be sentenced to death."



Over the course of one day in 1948, a Los Angeles man bungled several desperate attempts to end his life. He made six deep

gashes in his throat with a butcher knife. It didn't kill him. He jammed the knife's handle into a wall at chest level and sprinted into the blade three times. It didn't kill him. He gulped down a bottle of poison and turned on his kitchen's gas jets. Sniffing fumes, his neighbors phoned the cops, who rescued him.



#61 The Mount Mihara Suicides

A DISNEYLAND OF DEATH

Capitalism is a magical economic system, dipped in honey and smothered in coconut flakes. Unlike more high-minded wealth-distribution schemes, it ignores what people need and gives them what they want. Even though their desires may be unsavory, teeming with bacteria and swarming with flies, capitalism delivers it on a hot, steaming plate. And what people want more than anything, even more than warm restrooms and loose shoes, is to watch other people die.

This fact has never been celebrated with more carnivalesque élan than during a Japanese suicide wave in the mid-thirties. It began humbly enough one day in January, 1933, when two schoolgirls rode a small steamship to the desolate isle of Oshima, roughly sixty miles from Tokyo. They ascended Mount Mihara to view the island's only attraction, an active volcano. As they peered down into the belching, sulfurous pit, one of the girls, Mieko Ueki, related a curious myth to her friend, Masako Tomita. She recounted the Japanese legend which promises that all those who leap into the volcano's mouth immediately evaporate and ascend directly to heaven. Mieko further explained that the mountain was a place of staggering beauty and thus an ideal spot from which to leave the planet. Masako tried in vain to dissuade her friend from jumping and finally agreed to keep mum about the suicide for at least five years. After giving a ceremonial bow, Mieko plunged into the flaming crater. Masako took a steamship home.

Within weeks, she broke her promise and squealed to another schoolgirl, who decided that she just *had* to leap into the lava. Masako went along with her, but as she trudged down the mountain after her second friend's death jump, Oshima villagers noticed she was distraught and unaccompanied by the girl with whom she had arrived. A bit of police interrogation pried the whole story out of the sniveling little geisha.

The Japanese press pounced on the two Mount Mihara suicides like alley cats fighting over a chunk of tempura. By April, Masako was dead, allegedly from exhaustion, but several periodicals suggested that she had taken her own life due to the strain. Mihara's crater, until that point a rarely visited dot on the map, became an overnight tourist trap. The island's shipping company ditched their dinky steamer, which had chugged out to Oshima three times weekly, in favor of two new cruise ships each making daily excursions. Over the next two years, five cab companies, fourteen hotels, and twenty restaurants sprouted like bamboo shoots along the island's edge. Whereas only two photographers had previously worked the island, the increased tourist flow permitted forty-seven cameramen to make a living at the crater's edge. Camels and horses were imported to haul tourists across a mile-wide stretch of desert which encircles the volcano. In a marketing stroke straight out of Wet 'n' Wild, a quarter-mile "shoot the chute" slide was installed, permitting sightseers to glide down the mountainside after gawking at the infernal suicide pit.

Six persons leapt into the hellish vapors on a single Sunday in April, 1933. On the same day, twenty-five others tried to jump but were stopped by police. As more and more camera-slinging rubberneckers flocked to the island, rare became the day when at least one person didn't try to leap into the bubbling lava. One day, after hours had passed without any action, a sadistic tourist bellowed, "I dare someone to jump!" Within seconds, someone jumped.

Japanese officials had tallied one hundred and forty-three Mount Mihara suicides by the end of 1933, but other estimates put the total as high as five hundred. Another hundred and sixty-seven people dove to their deaths in 1934. That year, an additional twenty-nine people who had been restrained from leaping into the volcano jumped into the ocean while sailing home.

One Tokyo tabloid sold a lot of papers by staging a high-profile expedition into the belly of the beast. The publicity stunt was ostensibly intended to disprove the myth that Mihara's suicides instantly vaporized and flew heavenward. Wearing an oxygen mask and encased in a tiny steel egg suspended by a cable, a reporter plummeted twelve hundred and fifty feet into the volcano's mouth. Although he claimed to have seen a number of scorched bodies, he failed to return with any tangible proof. The legend intensified.

Another six hundred and nineteen Mihara suicides were recorded in 1936. Government functionaries erected a barbed-wire fence around the volcano's rim. Guards were stationed at the crater twenty-four hours a day. Seeking to frighten would-be jumpers, an organization called the Mount Mihara Anti-Suicide League installed mirrors which gave visitors a clear view into the crater's searing fury.

Partly as a result of these preventive measures and partly due to a fickle public's limited attention span, interest in "Suicide Mountain" ebbed. The death knell came in 1955, when it was finally proven that one didn't necessarily die after hurdling into the smoking abyss. When distant wails were heard issuing from the crater's bowels in January, 1955, a police crew was summoned. Nearly gagging from constant blasts of sulfur fumes, the crew descended several hundred feet down the superheated walls before encountering a bloody, banged-up couple. The dazed, sweaty pair had been there for thirty-three hours after tumbling down onto an outcropping only a few feet from the lake of fire. Using ropes, police hoisted them up to safety. When people realized that Mihara was merely a red-hot bowl of igneous soup instead of a one-way ticket to heaven, the killer mountain's luster was gone. History's greatest amusement park shut down for business.

#62 Karl Millar

RING OF FIRE

There is nothing on earth more painful than unrequited love. It hurts less to have a refrigerator dropped on your testicles than to love someone and not have them love you back. The lonesome ache of knowing that one's inamorata will never share your dreams, never hold your hand and watch a sunset, never eat cotton candy with you and give you blow jobs under the Ferris wheel, can be devastating to the frail of heart.

Karl Millar was probably a bit too loving for his own good. A young office worker in the evergreen Austrian burg of Szekelykoczard, he felt he had finally found the perfect bun in which to wrap his Vienna sausage. She was to be his little *Liebchen*, a mountain maiden who'd churn his milk into butter all night long.

To seal their Alpine love, he gave her an

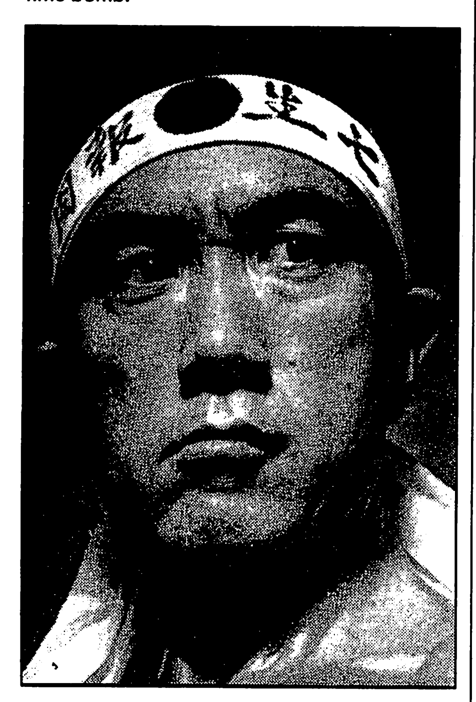


engagement ring in October, 1925. But the slippery *Frauenzimmer* gave it back, snubbing Millar's winsome wiener. He stuffed the ring, along with an explosive charge, down the barrel of a large-bore revolver and held the gun to his chest. Pulling the trigger, he shot the ring straight through himself, leaving a big hole in his heart.



Everywhere Yukio Mishima looked around his native Japan, he saw Western materialism's creeping poison. He saw it in the polyester slacks and alligator shoes, the pomaded hair and filtered cigarettes, the shoddy automobiles and throbbing neon signs. He saw the sons of samurai dressed up in little Jerry Vale monkey suits performing watered-down lounge music, and he felt ashamed.

So at age thirty, he picked up a set of weights and began pumping iron like a motherfucker. With locked jaws and knitted brows, he went at it with the squirrelly discipline of a Japanese G. Gordon Liddy. It got to the point where he could roll marbles up and down the ripples in his stomach. He achieved such mastery over his musculature, he was probably able to bend over and aim fecal pellets at a bull's-eye twenty yards away. In other words, he was a ticking time bomb.



As perhaps the most famous Japanese novelist of his time, he wrote with the slashing power of a Ginsu knife. He crossed swords with his life's themes—national loyalty, cruel love, and the unbending moral code of imperial warriors—the way a table-side chef at Benihana slices and dices a finely marbled slab of beef. He viewed a heroic death as infinitely favorable to



Yukio Mishima (top) and Masakatsu Morita (bottom). Actually, neither of them qualifies as a "bottom," since their bottoms were removed with swords.

a compromised life. "If you want your beauty to endure," he wrote at age thirty-four, "you must commit suicide at the height of your beauty." Six years later, he scripted and starred in a short film titled *Patriotism: The Rite of Love and Death.* Playing an army officer who fails in his attempt to stage a government coup, Mishima eviscerated himself on camera.

But apparently doubtful that art alone could stop Nippon's slide down the slopes of decadence, he spent two hundred thousand dollars to form an eighty-five-member private army he called the *Tatenokai* ("Shield Society"). Wearing cute little brown suits that Mishima had helped design, his shock troops practiced maneuvers on the foothills of Mount Fuji. Flinging Ninja death stars and chopping at the air, the *Tatenokai* prepared for the return of emperor worship and the expulsion of all those big, hairy Westerners.

On November 25, 1970, Mishima decided that it was time for action. Aided by four of his highest-ranking officers, he broke into the Tokyo office of Japan's Self-Defense Forces and took their commander hostage. After ordering the Thirty-Second Regiment to herd together in a courtyard, he walked onto a balcony and heckled the crowd about how a US-imposed constitution had defanged a once-proud Land of the Rising Sun. Instead of rallying to his cause, the eight hundred or so assembled soldiers blew raspberries and started howling for a sniper to take him out. In a pissy-fit, Mishima stormed back into the general's headquarters. "I came out on the stage intending to make the audience weep," he told a comrade, "but instead they burst out laughing." Then, in the superannuated tradition of seppuku (better known as hara-kiri in the West), he drew a sword and ripped out his intestines. Immediately thereafter, Mishima's chief lieutenant and rumored butt-buddy Masakatsu Morita lopped off his leader's head with a long steel blade. Morita then disemboweled himself and was decapitated by an underling. Dancing in the clouds above Fujiyama, Mishima is no doubt pleased that the tables have turned and America is now a sprawling colony of Hondas, karaoke bars, and green mustard.

#64
Marilyn Monroe
DOWNERS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

When an entire generation covets your bleached-blonde muffburger more than world peace or a cure for cancer, does that place too much pressure on you? Can you be blamed for feeling empty if everyone ignores your acting ability and zeroes in on your golden bush? Should you kill yourself if others are blind to your inner beauty and see you as a vagina with lipstick?

Ever since she was eleven and started busting out all over her sweater, men looked at Norma Jean Baker as little more than a blowup doll who breathed. They didn't seem to care that dad had driven away on a motorcycle while mom was pregnant with her. They didn't flinch when she told them she had almost been suffocated with a pillow while still an infant. It didn't bother them at all that her mommy didn't feed her or change her diapers, that the woman wandered around the house talking to herself and had to be institutionalized after attacking a friend with a knife. They seemed bored to hear that she had been tossed among twelve different sets of foster parents, ranging from psycho-Christians who told her she would burn in hell to brain-damaged boozehounds who let her play with



Boop-boop-a-do!

empty whiskey bottles. They acted unconcerned when she tearfully recounted how a foster parent had raped and impregnated her. They only wanted to see that pussy, which for them was like cruising down the Gold Coast.

When she became an internationally desired honeycomb named Marilyn Monroe, it didn't seem to ease the pain. She spent torturous nights sucking on the limp garden snails of paunchy movie producers. She waded through unhappy conjugal unions with dumb-as-a-log Joe DiMaggio and toadstool-ugly Arthur Miller. Although she was said to have willingly fetched the bones of Frank Sinatra and Bobby Kennedy, neither of them pledged to adopt the sad little puppy. Trying her hand at poetry, she emitted the anguished yip of an abused poodle:

> *Help, help*
> *Help, I feel life coming closer*
> *When all I want is to die.*

By 1962, she had developed a rep around Hollywood as a pill-popping prima donna, a troublesome tantrum-thrower who had twice attempted suicide. She was notorious for showing up late and flubbing her lines. Drug addiction seemed to be eating away at whatever brain she had. When she was fired during the filming of *Something's Got to Give* in June, conventional wisdom had it that at thirty-six, Marilyn Monroe was pretty much finished.

The official version of what happened on Saturday, August 4, goes something like this: At around five-fifteen p.m., she spoke with her shrink, Ralph Greenson, complaining of depression. Greenson suggested that she take a stroll on the beach. Marilyn then chatted via telephone with actor Peter Lawford, who invited her to a poker party at his bungalow. She demurred, then later called him back, and Lawford was struck by the finality in her voice: "I really don't think I can come down tonight," she reportedly murmured. "Will you say goodbye to Pat [Lawford's wife] and to Jack [Kennedy] and to yourself, because you're a nice guy." When Lawford tried to snap her out of it, she whispered, "You've all been so nice to me," and hung up. Lawford said he tried to call her back but kept getting busy signals. At around eight p.m., Marilyn said, "Good night, honey," to her maid Eunice Murray and closed the bedroom door. She put a Sinatra record on the turntable. Within moments, she received a telephone call from an unnamed stranger.

When Eunice noticed a light emanating from under Marilyn's bedroom door at around three a.m., she knocked a few times but was unable to rouse her. Picking up a fireplace poker, she tiptoed outside and parted the bedroom-window curtains. Seeing Marilyn spread out naked on the bed, face-down with her hand still clutching the phone, Eunice rushed inside and dialed both Greenson and Hyman Engelberg, Monroe's private doctor.

Greenson arrived at three-forty a.m. Using the fireplace poker to smash through Marilyn's bedroom window, he crawled in and found that the yellow-haired sexpot was dead. Several empty pill bottles were scattered near the bed. Dr. Engelberg arrived about ten minutes later. For unknown reasons, the two physicians waited more than a half-hour before notifying police. Dr. Thomas Noguchi, the "Coroner to the Stars," would list Monroe's death as an overdose from Nembutal and chloral hydrate.

For thirty years, conspiracy buffs have struggled to fill in apparent factual gaps concerning Marilyn's death. Few of them accept the suicide premise. Some have speculated that either the Mafia or the CIA whacked her in a revenge move against the Kennedys. The most popular hypothesis is that Bobby Kennedy either ordered or committed her murder, most likely by lethal injection. Kennedy was known to have been in Los Angeles around August 4, and witnesses, including Eunice Murray, said that he visited Marilyn the afternoon of her death. It was rumored that Bobby had announced to Marilyn that he'd no longer be seeing her, a revelation which precipitated a shoving match. There were also whispers that Marilyn had planned a press conference the following week to announce their illicit affair if Bobby failed to propose marriage. Since Marilyn's diary—allegedly containing highly confidential, national-security-threatening references to Jimmy Hoffa, Frank Sinatra, South Vietnam's President Diem, and mob boss Sam Giancana—was missing from the death scene, theorists posited that Kennedy had ordered it confiscated.

There were other things which pointed away from a suicide verdict. An intestinal autopsy revealed none of the trademark yellow dye that would be found from ingesting Nembutal. Marilyn was known to require a glassful of water to swallow a single aspirin, let alone forty or fifty pills, yet there was no drinking glass near her body. Rigor mortis and the purple stain of lividity had set in by the time police arrived, indicating that she had been dead for about eight hours. Yet her doctors reported the time of death as just after midnight, a discrepancy of at least four hours. These inconsistencies raise some unsettling questions, but does it really matter? Any way you slice it, the bitch is still dead.



On August 14, 1962, a little over a week after the world received news of Marilyn's death, there were twelve suicides in New York City, supposedly a one-day record. During the month after Marilyn kicked, the entire nation's suicide rate rose twelve percent, with several suicide notes mentioning Monroe.



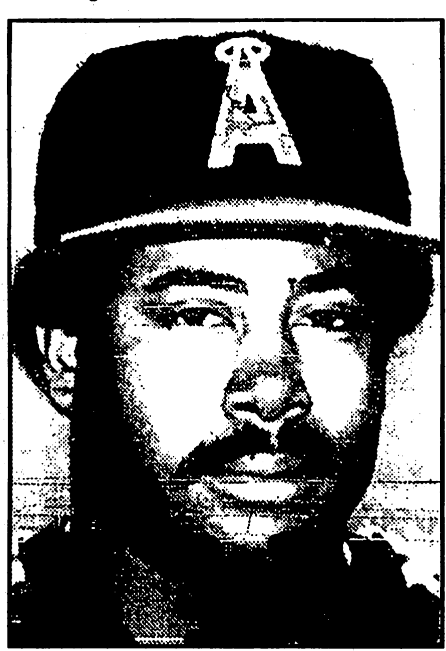
Boop-boop-a-dead.



In June, 1989, British model Kay Kent, a Monroe impersonator who underwent plastic surgery so she could more closely resemble Marilyn, was found dead in her bed next to an empty pill bottle. "It seems she took this Marilyn Monroe thing too far this time," quipped an ex-boyfriend.



Ninth inning, two outs, two strikes. One strike away from the World Series. Global adulation. Hot camera lights. Foamy champagne baths. Jewelry. Trophies. Hefty cash bonuses. Lucrative promotional deals. Buoyant groupies wearing nothing but baseball caps. The summit of national sports achievement. The envy of countless sandlot dreamers. Something they'll never be able to take away from you. Donnie Moore wound up, kicked back, and fired a forkball toward home plate, but the batter smacked that ball clean over the left-field fence, shattering Donnie's dreams forever.



He was never able to escape the slow-motion instant replay of THE PITCH that kept playing in his head. He couldn't forgive himself for failing to lift the California Angels into the 1986 World Series. The fans and sportswriters never forgave him, either. When he ascended the mound during the next season, he was showered with catcalls: LO-SER! LO-SER! To make things worse, he was saddled with injuries, but the management accused him of just being lazy. The Angels fired him in the fall of 1988. At age thirty-five, Donnie found himself back in the minors. But even that wouldn't last. In June, 1989, after seven abysmal performances, he was cut from the lowly Omaha Royals. Donnie Moore's life was now entirely blanketed under the shadow of THE PITCH.

Tonya Moore fell backward in surprise as her husband fired three .45-caliber bullets into her on July 26, 1989. Before he could explain his actions, Donnie put a thick, hot slug into his head and fell lifeless onto the kitchen floor. Wheezing with pain from a hospital bed, Tonya would later say, "He had a lot of problems, but I still love him.... Donnie wasn't like normal people." Incapacitated by her gunshot wounds, Tonya was unable to attend Donnie's funeral. A family lawyer arranged for Donnie's corpse to be wheeled into a private hospital room so Tonya could pay her last respects. "I told him I love him," Tonya said to a reporter. "I asked, 'Why?' "

But everyone knew why. "That home run killed him," said Moore's agent, claiming that he had unsuccessfully urged Donnie to see a psychiatrist. "You destroyed a man's life over one pitch," Angels player Brian Downing snarled at reporters. "The guy was just not the same after that.... You buried the guy." So Donnie Moore blew out his brains because of one home-run pitch. Talk about a sore loser.



Fourteen-year-old Vivian Tanner stabbed himself to death in January, 1923, when his London schoolmates criticized his performance as a soccer-game referee.



On July 4, 1931, someone identified by the *New York Times* only as "a Yugoslav student in St. Nicholas High School" in Belgrade promised to kill himself if the national soccer team lost to Romania. Seconds after being informed that Romania won, 4-2, he shot himself.

#66
Lillie Norwalk
A BAD HAIR DAY

Lillie was a girl with hair—long, beautiful hair. Shinin', gleamin', flaxen, waxen, the shit grew down to there. When she strolled the Flatbush streets with those tresses gently blowing like the fronds of a weeping willow, men's trousers swelled like pup tents. She could wrap her hair around a guy's pole and buff it as if she were shining a shoe. She was a friggin' Rapunzel, Lillie was.

But the Brooklyn chippy's succulent mane led her headlong into a life of libertinism. Neighbors spoke of mounting debts and an unchaste love affair. When Lillie entered her bathroom one night in May, 1892, locking the door behind her, she felt that her future was as dead as a frizzy clump of split ends. Leaning over the sink, she tied her hair around one of the faucets. She wrapped it around and around, with each rotation forcing her throat down against the sink's hard marble edge. The next morning, when her father and two others broke down the bathroom door, Lillie was as cold as a jar of facial cream. The wash basin's pressure had dug a half-inch-deep groove in her throat.



Perhaps feeling it was undignified, fifteen-year-old Annabelle Lewis declined her father's offer to ride her into town on his tomato wagon for an appointment to have her hair bobbed. That was on Saturday, September 2, 1926, the weekend before she was to begin her sophomore year at New Jersey's Bridgeton High School. Her father told her not to worry, that she could reschedule her hair-bobbing for Tuesday or Wednesday. That was easy for *him* to say, but he didn't have to face his classmates without an appropriate coif. On Sunday morning, while the family ate breakfast, Annabelle blew her ratty scalp off with a shotgun.



Only three days after Annabelle Lewis's suicide, Parisian shop-owner Charles Serlandie sent a bullet into his heart. He had promised his two daughters, of whose flowing blonde locks he had frequently boasted to customers, that he'd kill himself if they followed the latest trend and had their hair bobbed. They apparently thought he was joking and had their fleeces shorn to the trendy unisex look. Within hours, Serlandie fulfilled his promise.



Christopher Holligan of Lancing, England, allowed himself to be run over by a train on February 11, 1966, after the Rolling Stones devotee's legal guardian forced him to undergo a "short back and sides" at the hands of a local barber.



Fiercely clinging to ancient Russian Orthodox rituals, the Old Believers clustered together in small, autonomous communes in the frigid outback country of Russia's northern forests. Their isolated outposts reached the White Sea and up into Siberia, dotting the frozen zones like ticks on a polar bear's ass. These icy hinterlands proved an ideal setting in which to follow the faith of one's forefathers, to worship in a manner untethered by the reformist tendencies of Moscow and Rome's heretical theocrats. In short, it was a perfect breeding ground for religious psychosis.


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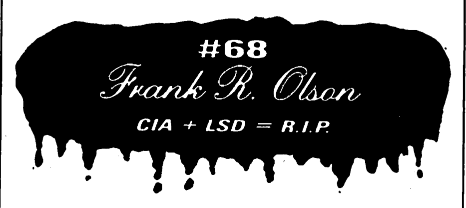
As early as 1620, one Russian monk had prophesied that the Antichrist would reveal himself in 1666. When this didn't happen, certain mystics used numerology to postpone the Great Beast's arrival until somewhere between 1674 and 1700. When the Russian Orthodox hierarchy condemned the Old Believers in 1667 and ordered their texts destroyed, the O.B.s took this as an omen of the last days. Their reason muddled amid the incense-choked haze of Eastern mysticism, they abandoned all earthly duties and prepared for the final judgment. Many of them sat night after night in closed coffins, waiting for the last trumpet to deliver them skyward. Others chose to beat God to the draw and actively pursued their own deaths. Several of them starved themselves to death. Taking a much quicker and more dramatic path, entire congregations of Old Believers huddled together in their wooden churches, soaked the walls with oil, and perished in a baptism of fire. Some even argued that all of Mother Russia should be set ablaze in supplication to an angry Jehovah.

Fully aware that clear-cutting the peasantry would result in free land for those who tarried on earth, roving bunco artists posing as missionaries preached the Old Believers toward extinction. Promising salvation through self-immolation, they herded dodo-brained villagers—sometimes thousands at once—into mass human bonfires. If people resisted, the phony messengers of God bamboozled them into believing that the Antichrist's troops were only miles away and closing in fast. They lured the young'uns into the flames with promises that heaven held forth all the apples and honey they could eat.

The flames started to die out in the early 1700s when people realized that the Antichrist wasn't showing up anytime soon. However, the *mania religiosa* had already claimed an estimated twenty thousand lives. Isolated flare-ups persisted. In 1896, twenty-five Crimean Old Believers buried themselves alive rather than respond to a national census. The Old Believers were said to have given rise to a number of splinter groups, among them the Flagellants, a sex sect who held wild orgies in the name of "Christ's love"; the *Skoptsy,* who believed that women's bodies were an obstacle to God and thus practiced self-castration; and the slap-happy Milk Drinkers, whose shocking heresy was that they imbibed milk during fasts. It can't be proven, but it's probably safe to assume that the Flagellants got more recruits than the other two factions combined.



Amaxosa, a leader of South Africa's Kaffir tribes, convinced his disciples in 1856 that a mass suicide would resurrect all their legendary ancestors. Approximately fifty thousand tribesmen killed themselves before the Kaffirs decided that Amaxosa was talking shit.



SMASH! went the hotel window, breaking into cubic crystals which sprinkled like granulated sugar onto the pavement ten stories below. Amid the glass fragments was the bloody body of scientist Frank Olson, dead from shock and multiple fractures.

His family could point to very little that would have portended Frank's suicide leap from New York's Statler Hotel sometime after midnight on November 28, 1953. To his wife and four kids, he had seemed stable and generally well-adjusted. There *was* a sudden black mood which gripped him during the weekend prior to his fall, a weekend he spent at home after attending a conference at the US Army's Special Operations Section at Fort Detrick, Maryland. His widow Alice said he appeared to be a "totally different person" that weekend, just sitting there and staring into space. By the following Saturday, he was dead. All the CIA told Alice at the time was that he experienced a sudden mental collapse and either "jumped or fell."

Twenty-two years later, a Rockefeller commission report contained a reference to a man who in 1953 had plunged to his death from a tenth-floor hotel-room window. He was said to have been suffering "severe side effects" from LSD the CIA had administered without his knowledge. The man wasn't named in the report, but within weeks the Olson family came forward and identified him as Frank Olson. An esteemed civilian researcher, Olson was known to have been working with the United States Army in the area of biological warfare. One night after dinner during a week-long retreat at Fort Detrick, a CIA agent named Dr. Sidney Gottlieb slipped LSD into a bottle of Cointreau, serving the psychedelic cocktail to an unwitting Olson and seven other men. Roughly twenty minutes after drinking the liquefied acid, the men were informed that they had been dosed in order for technicians to observe their reactions.



The report failed to note Olson's immediate response to the drug, but by the time the conference had ended, Frank was riding a heavy bummer, MAANNNN. As he sat at home with thunderclouds hovering two inches over his head, he told his wife he was going to resign from the Special Operations Section. However, he phoned her from work on Monday to say that he felt better and had changed *his mind.* The next day, CIA operatives took him away for a four-day battery of psychological tests during which he was examined by Dr. Harold Abramson, a pioneer in studying LSD's effects on humans. It was advised that Olson be confined to a sanitarium.

On November 27, while arrangements were being made for Olson's psychiatric "vacation," Olson and his CIA escort Robert Lashbrook checked into Manhattan's Statler Hotel. They ate dinner, watched TV, and fell asleep at around ten-thirty p.m. Lashbrook recalls being awakened some time in the middle of the night by a loud crashing noise. He flicked on a lamp, noticed that Olson's bed was empty, and felt the chill breeze coming in from a smashed window.

Beginning in the early fifties, government agencies began slipping acid to unsuspecting American citizens. The tests were ostensibly conducted for "scientific" purposes, but the more pragmatic objective was to see whether enemy troops would get blissed-out and beat their AK-47s into sitars when US fighter planes sprayed them with liquid hallucinogens. In 1973, the feds outlawed drug tests on involuntary American subjects. To our knowledge, there is still no prohibition against force-medicating our enemies, so what are we waiting for? I'd love to see a desertful of once-angry camel jockeys flinging luminous Frisbees and chanting, "Jerry Garcia is God." Then, without hesitation, we'd slaughter them.



Claiming that the CIA "administered certain drugs... or toxic substances" to her husband while he applied for a job with the agency, Mrs. Edith W. Christensen filed suit for eight hundred thousand dollars on May 20, 1966. James Christensen, an ex-Marine, had written, "I feel strong and vigorous and have no complaints" on his CIA job application. He shot himself eight days after his second interview.



Things had gotten so bad, Jerry Olson started to wonder if he'd be more useful to his family dead than alive. His sister had booted him out of her

house, saying the time was ripe for the forty-six-year-old unemployed bar-supply salesman to support himself. Since his eviction, Jerry had puttered around southern Florida in his van, parking on deserted roads at night and curling up for a few fitful hours of sleep. What a miserable way to live, and with Christmas right around the corner.

Then, as if he had been smacked upside the head by one of God's angels, the idea struck him. 'Twas the yuletide, and 'twas better to give than receive, *n'est-ce pas*? Jerry decided to give the gift of life to his older brother Bob, who had been waiting three years for a heart donor. On Sunday, December 17, 1989, Jerry wrote a letter and recorded a tape for his daughter. Jerry, whose devotion to Elvis bordered on the pathological, had named his little girl Lisa Marie in honor of the King's baby buttercup. "I'm tired of everyone saying how much talent I've got," Jerry wrote to the estranged fruit of his loins. "Uncle Bob's got everything to live for. And if they find out he can use it and Uncle Bob wants it, I'm going to be his donor, Lisa. I figure I could do more good for him than myself." On the cassette, he belted out a rectum-wringing rendition of "I'll Be Home for Christmas." He then dropped the tape and letter into an envelope and mailed it to his little princess.

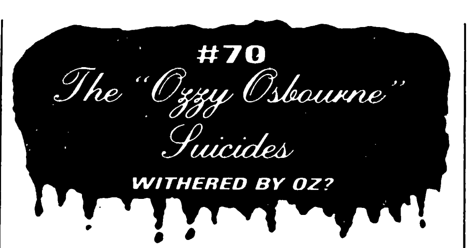
On Monday night, he parked his van outside the emergency room of the University Community Hospital in Tamarac, Florida. He then stuck a gun in his mouth and checked out of Heartbreak Hotel. If he had truly planned to donate his heart to his brother, he was so shortsighted that one has to think he deserved to die. Although only a few feet away from countless medical technicians, he informed no one of his organ-donating intentions. It wasn't until ten minutes after he pulled the trigger that a nurse discovered his body draped over his steering wheel. It was a while later when investigators rummaging through his van finally discovered suicide notes requesting that his heart be shipped to Bob in Illinois. It was far too late, and Jerry's heart was pretty much what Jerry had rightly discerned his own life to be—useless.



(Excerpt):
[There are] too many downs and no ups for me on this roller coaster ride of life.



Remorseful that some tainted meth he gave his girlfriend to inject had damaged the girl's kidneys, Michael Hanley of Norwood, Pennsylvania, shot himself in February, 1980. Unaware that tissue samples and kidney size must match for an organ donation to be successful, he left a note instructing that his kidneys be given to his girlfriend. Doctors were unable to use Hanley's posthumous gift of Pennsylvania piss filters.



When I was twelve, I won a four-record set called *Superstars of the Seventies* in a radio contest. Although I liked Alice Cooper and Led Zep, my tiny Catholic mind was drawn to Black Sabbath's "Paranoid." I wrote the lyrics down on a sheet of loose-leaf paper and showed them to my old lady: "Fin-ished with my wom-an cuz she couldn't help me with my mind/Peo-ple think I'm in-sane be-cause I am frown-ing all the time." Figuring that I had written it, mom was ready to have me committed.

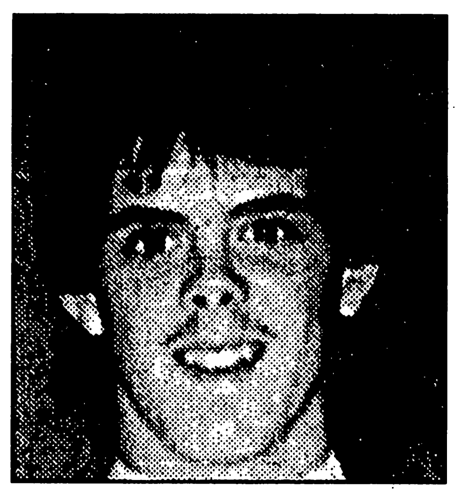
Ozzy Osbourne has that kind of effect on parents. "I knew it was the music," said Jack McCollum of Indio, California, after his son John shot himself with a .22-caliber pistol on October 26, 1984. The nineteen-year-old youth, who was wearing stereo headphones when he killed himself, reportedly had spent the hours preceding his death spinning Ozzy records. It was the lyrics to "Suicide Solution," a tune on Osbourne's *Blizzard of Ozz* LP, which raised the elder McCollum's eyebrows: "Breaking laws, knocking doors, but there's no one home/Made your bed, rest your head, but you lie there and moan/Where to hide? Suicide is the only way out/Don't you know what it's really all about?" Claiming that the words were "Satanic-influenced," McCollum filed suit against Ozzy and his record company. Legal papers stated that Osbourne's "violent, morbid, and inflammatory music . . . encouraged John McCollum to take his own life." A judge decided in favor of Ozzy, but not before taking a swipe at him: "Trash can be given First Amendment protection, too."

Osbourne was again dragged into court late in 1990, when the parents of two Georgia teens slapped the Beelzebubbian buffoon with a joint lawsuit over two separate suicides occurring in 1986 and 1988. Michael Waller, sixteen-year-old son of a Fitzgerald, Georgia, church deacon, shot himself around two a.m. on May 3, 1986, while his friends watched. According to Waller's father, the boy had been despondent over a recent D.U.I. arrest. Apprehensive about an impending court date, Michael reportedly said, "Pop, I believe old Oz has the solution." When Mr. Waller found Ozzy's *Speak of the Devil* on his son's tape deck after the suicide, he said he finally "understood what the young'un was talking about."

Two years later, seventeen-year-old high-school dropout Harold Matthew Hamilton made off with his friend's gun and car, showing up at his mother's house with a sob story of how a girl he liked had given him the cold shoulder. Obviously agitated, he left after telling mommy that he was going to drive to his sister's house in Augusta, Georgia. A few hours later, Hamilton was found fifty miles outside of Augusta, slumped over in the front seat of his car. A bullet was in his head, and Ozzy's live *Tribute* opus was in the cassette deck.

Although a live rendition of "Suicide Solution" appears on *Tribute*, Hamilton and Waller's attorney said he was unable to locate any subliminal messages on it. He focused instead on the studio version. According to the attorney, under the superficially innocuous words, "Ah, people, you really know where it's at/You gotta bodge, get the flaps out," lurked the sinister command, "Why try, why try, get the gun and try it." As with the McCollum case, the lawsuit went nowhere.

Speaking against his attorney's advice when the McCollum allegations were first made, Ozzy defended "Suicide Solution." He said McCollum's father had misread "I tell you to enjoy life" as "I tell you to end your life." Osbourne claimed that he had written the song as a reaction to the death of a rocker friend who had overdosed. The song was intended, he said, to illustrate that suicide was *no* solution, and that to interpret the tune any other way would be ridiculous. Oh, and biting off the heads of live bats isn't?




Two unfortunate soldiers in Ozzy Osbourne's Satanic Army: Michael Waller (left); Harold Matthew Hamilton (right).



Houston resident John Parks loved his mother very much, so much that he was probably a little overprotective. Sharing a matchbox-sized apartment with his eighty-nine-year-old genetrix, he tended to her every need. If he saw that she was sitting on her rocking chair, he placed a cozy blanket on her lap. Well aware of her delicate condition and worried that visitors might disturb her, he began denying friends and relatives access to their apartment. If neighbors in the building had a question, he pinned the answer to their doors.

When repairman Ernest Vasquez came to their apartment to fix a leak in the spring of 1985, he noticed that curtains were hung over the dining-room entrance to the living room, and he could hear the faint sound of a television humming from behind them. Parks told Vasquez that his mother was sitting in her rocking chair watching the tube and shouldn't be bothered. When Vasquez came back for another repair a few months later, Parks's mother was still behind the curtains, watching TV. Returning in the spring of '86 to plug yet another leak, Vasquez casually asked Parks how his mother was feeling.

"Fine," Parks curtly responded. Vasquez then asked how old she was. "Now you're getting personal," Parks snapped. "Let's cut it off right now." The men shared no further words.

In October, 1986, suspicious relatives started to demand that Parks permit them to visit his mother. He refused. His relatives sent a social worker to investigate, but Parks wouldn't allow her inside the apartment. The social worker returned a week later with police and a search warrant. When no one answered, they kicked open the door. John Parks was dead in the bedroom, a .38-caliber pistol in his hand and a chunk of lead in his head. His mother was still in the living room on the rocking chair. Police said she was "mummified" as a result of having been dead "anywhere from six months to two years."



As with the Oscars, the Olympics are only worthwhile when people are taken hostage or the winners make some embarrassing political gesture. Only the participants' families care about the luge or the three-thousand-meter steeplechase, while the rest of us snore through another trio of tearful medal recipients standing stiffly through another dreadful national anthem. But if a dozen Zimbabwean nationalists with ski masks and Uzis suddenly parachute onto the field, let the games begin!

Peregrinus, a philosopher whose name sounds like a painful genital rash, was a spirited mouthpiece for the doctrine of Cynicism, something all the Greco-Roman kids used to be crazy about. He found pleasure unpleasant and bragged that he wasn't afraid of dying. But unsure whether the other Cynics liked him, he designed the ultimate PR stunt for his school of thought. To prove that death held no sting for him, he proclaimed that he'd walk butt-naked into flames during the Olympic games of 165 A.D. A mite pallid as the moment of truth arrived, Peregrinus delivered a mostly inaudible speech about bringing "a golden life to a golden close." The moon was rising as he cast off his robes and walked up to the flames. He threw some incense into the inferno and then stepped right in, going pfft! within moments. A silly legend told how a phoenix flew up from the pyre. A bunch of oily Greek men then stopped having anal sex long enough to throw some rocks around, or whatever it is that they do at the Olympics.



Scott had a lot of friends at his old school. They liked him there. Scott didn't have a lot of friends at his new school. They didn't like him there. The eleven-year-old transfer student at the Chester Community Grade School in Illinois felt all balled-up like a piece of scrap paper someone had chucked into a flaking metal wastebasket. He felt pissed on like an antiseptic cake in one of the boys' lavatory urinals. He didn't feel loved, wanted, and cuddled like a new boy should.

So when he was given a weekend assignment to write an essay in March, 1986, he called it "Suicide Mistake." He diligently wrote, edited, and rewrote it. He organized it into four sections. The first, "Introduction," acquainted the reader with a boy named Dan, a boy whose story, it was explained, was based on the true-life saga of another boy named Scott Phillips. A second section, "The New Boy," dealt with Dan's move to Chester, Illinois, after leaving a school where everyone liked him. Section Three, "Making Friends," told of Dan's frustration at his inability to find lasting, supportive playmates. The final section was called "Committing Suicide" and related how Dan used a plastic bag to asphyxiate himself.

Scott handed in "Suicide Mistake" on Monday, March 20. As his teacher read it that night, she became alarmed and telephoned the principal. Together they decided that Scott was a prime candidate for therapy. As they spoke, paramedics hovered over Scott's body. They were unable to save him. Like "Dan," Scott used a plastic bag to asphyxiate himself.



Scott Phillips, author of "Suicide Mistake."



In 1980, Andrew Irvine of Birmingham, England, fired a .22-caliber pistol into his mouth while standing in a lane at a local gun club. Two years prior to this, Andrew had the misfortune of finding the body of his older brother, also a suicide. Andrew's father subsequently damned a British school system which had given his son "macabre" homework such as assignments to write his own epitaph and an essay based on the theme "A Shot in the Dark."

#74

Sylvia Plath

PATRON SAINT OF SULLEN SORORITY SISTERS

With her plain face and irritating habit of using

high-SAT words such as 'frangible,' this death poetess is a demigod to innumerable depressed female English majors. Every wan, bespectacled, frilly-sock-wearing, ballerina-slippers-owning, snot-nosed *jeune fille* who teases dopey boys by speaking in French owes a debt to the girl whom her family called "Sivvy."

But what set Sylvia Plath apart from most verbally gifted white Anglo-Saxonettes was her lifelong clinical depression. Instead of turning out dry sonnets in impeccable calligraphy, it was as if she shattered the page with an ice pick. Her words stung like an alcohol-soaked cotton ball on a bleeding zit. She was a girl who at age fourteen would write the world-weary "I Thought That I Could not be Hurt," who at seventeen described ocean waves breaking "like green glass." Flooded with new sensations upon entering college, she likened her head to a watermelon that had been smashed open.

Having spent most of her youth as somewhat of a prodigy, her feelings were numbed in 1953 after she was refused admission to Frank O'Connor's short-story-writing class. During a summer of electroshock treatments, Sylvia attempted to end her life for the first time. She broke into a steel cabinet at home, swallowed a handful of pills, and left a note which read, "Have gone for a long walk. Will be home tomorrow." She was found whimpering behind a pile of firewood in the house's cellar three days later. She fictionalized the incident in her novel *The Bell Jar,* comparing her emotional state at the time to "being stuffed further and further into a black, airless sack with no way out."

Sylvia recovered somewhat and married poet Ted Hughes, moving to England and living for the most part in the shadow of Ted's reputation. She squeezed out two of his kids from between her legs, attempted suicide again in the guise of a car accident, and got divorced. In December, 1962, she moved into the former London house of William Butler Yeats. At age thirty, her literary powers had never been sharper. "I am in heaven," she wrote to her mother in a letter dated December 12, 1962. "Life is such fun."

But it was to be the worst winter England had endured in over a hundred years. Biting cold and chronic influenza knocked any temporary vitality straight out of her. "I am feeling a bit grim," read a letter to her mom written only six weeks after the above missive. "I am seeing the finality of it all...." A few days later, she wrote a poem called "Edge," a clear foreshadowing of her own death:

The woman is perfected
Her dead

Body wears the smile of accomplishment,
The illusion of a Greek necessity

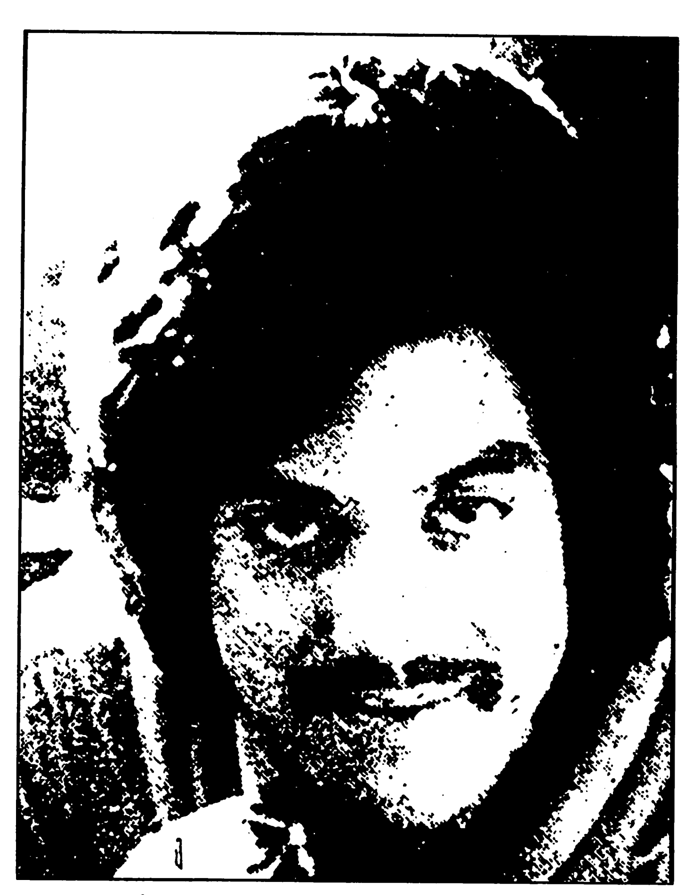
Flows in the scrolls of her toga,
Her bare

Feet seem to be saying:
We have come so far, it is over....

Within a week, it was. On the frigid morning of February 11, 1963, after leaving out bread, butter, and milk for her kids, she sealed off the kitchen and placed her head in an oven. Several noxious lungfuls later, she quietly Plathed away.



Plath: another sensitive broad.



Prinze: Even Tony Orlando was unable to help him.



#75 Freddie Prinze

AIN'T LOOOOKING SO GOOOOD!

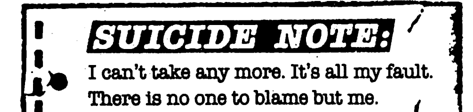
For a few moments in the mid-seventies, Freddie Prinze held the double-edged honor of being America's favorite Hispanic. Playing opposite "the Man" in the hit sitcom *Chico and the Man,* he was an open-shirted, bell-bottom-wearing, hip young Chicano buck whose wisecracks tormented crabby auto-shop owner Jack Albertson: "Eez not my *chob,* man!" Prinze did for Hispanics what Jimmie "J.J." Walker did (or didn't do) for blacks: reinforce the worst stereotypes while trying to erase them. Like J.J., he spouted a stock punch line which made its way onto T-shirts and into singles' bars. Whereas Walker's line was "Dy-no-mite!," Prinze's was "Looooking gooood!"

But Freddie's life was the old *pez*-out-of-*agua* story: Manhattan street punk shoots on a wadlike trajectory to fame but ends up feeling lost and lonesome. At age twenty-two, he was guest-hosting for Johnny Carson and had been invited by Jimmy Carter to strut his overwrought ethnic caricature onstage at Carter's Pre-Inaugural gala. He had even reached the pinnacle of show-biz success—a personal friendship with singer Tony Orlando—but it still wasn't enough. "Is this what it's all about?" he once asked *Chico* producer James Komack. "Even my friendships are related to ratings." When Komack told him to relax and enjoy his success, Freddie replied, "No, that's not happiness for me anymore."

During the last year of his life, Freddie's friends saw the chili-flavored comic grow increasingly morose. He watched a copy of Zapruder's Kennedy-assassination film again and again. He became dependent on prescription 'ludes. A fifteen-month marriage to a Wyoming travel agent collapsed. While his amigos stared with impotent horror, Freddie would wave his .32-caliber pistol around and threaten to end it all.

"I'm gonna kill myself," he lamented to supporting player Scatman Crothers one afternoon during a rehearsal on the *Chico* soundstage. That night, Freddie drove to his apartment at the Beverly Comstock and played backgammon with some friends, who vainly tried to lift his spirits. After they had left, at around three a.m. on January 28, 1977, he phoned his manager and told him to cancel an appointment for the next day. "What's the use of having any more meetings?" Prinze allegedly mumbled. Disquieted by the call, his manager sped over to Freddie's pad, arriving to find him engaged in a telephone conversation with his estranged wife. Slamming down the receiver, Prinze reached beneath some sofa pillows and withdrew the .32, firing a bullet straight through his *cabeza.* He died from massive head wounds the next day at the UCLA Medical Center. That

night, NBC canceled the airing of a *Chico* episode they deemed as "tasteless" in light of what had transpired. The show had reportedly mentioned "living zombies," brain damage, and death.





According to the book *The Enigma of Suicide*, a thirteen-year-old Los Angeles girl shot herself soon after Prinze's death. She left behind an eight-page letter which willed her toys and clothes to various people, gave instructions on how to care for her pets, and contained the entreaty, "Please let me be buried by Freddie."



For most of the fifties, George Reeves played TV's Superman, the granite-jawed defender of the international monetary system. He darted through the clouds, ensuring that America would shit on the rest of the world for generations to come. He ignored the pulchritudinous Lois Lane and served as a brutish top man to a willing, pliant Jimmy Olsen. Displaying the dramatic range of an Adam West, he had a stiff-shouldered presence which leads one to believe you could have sharpened a pencil in his sphincter.



Reeves: pencil-sharpening annular muscle.

In his real-life Clark Kent mode, Reeves was born George Bessolo to a smothering mommy who kept an "eternal flame" burning in front of George's picture. It wasn't until he was nearly thirty when he discovered that mom had lied about his birth date and that the man he had called dad was actually a stepfather. Nor had mommy told him that his stepfather killed himself a few years after she divorced him.

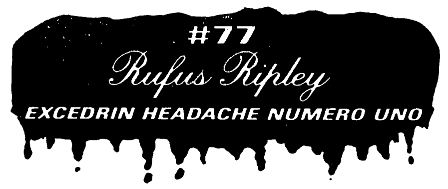
He successfully weaned himself away from his mother, but he couldn't escape being typecast as Superman. For two years after the show was canceled, his career was relegated to public appearances where he minced about in form-fitting tights and a cape.

To boost interest in his sagging fame, the one-time boxer set up an exhibition match with light-heavyweight champion Archie Moore, to take place in the summer of 1959. On the night of Tuesday, June 15, he hosted a small cocktail party for his fiancée Lenore Lemmon and writer Robert Condon, who had been assigned a magazine article about Reeves's impending slugfest with Moore. From all accounts, everyone got thoroughly stewed and drifted into the Land of Nod around midnight. An hour or so later, two of Reeves's friends pounded on the front door. Miss Lemmon awoke and let them in. Reeves got out of bed, threw on a robe, and stormed downstairs. He chastised the intruders for dropping in so late and bellowed that he was "in no mood for a party." After one of the guests apologized, Reeves raged back up to his bedroom.

"He's going upstairs to shoot himself," said a blasé Lenore Lemmon, who was scheduled to marry Reeves in Tijuana that coming Friday. The party-goers then heard rustling noises coming from the floor above. "See, he's opening the drawer to get a gun," Lemmon said. KA-BLAM! "See there, I told you," she said, "he shot himself." Reeves was found naked on his bed, the blast from a 9mm Luger proving more harmful than a megadose of kryptonite.



Real-estate dealer George W. Reeves, no relation to the actor, foreclosed his own mortgage with four shots from a revolver in Tarrytown, New York, on August 24, 1914.



POUND, POUND, POUND. The pain inside Rufus Ripley's head made him see stars. It was as if a flock of woodpeckers had flown into his ear and started hammering away. He was a good worker and a sincere Christian, but the relentless throbbing often made him unable to attend church or go to his job. Doctors were at a loss to uncover the root of his affliction. For as long as he could, Rufus ground his teeth and endured the intra-cranial Chinese water torture.

Finally, one day around New Year's, 1872, he couldn't stand it anymore. He walked into the Bank of New York and shot himself in the head, blotting out the pain better than any aspirin could. An autopsy revealed that numerous quarter-inch, needle-sharp bones had formed on his skull's interior. As they grew, they punctured Ripley's cerebrum and dug into it, causing the stabbing pain from which he sought his final refuge. The poor bastard had gone through much of life with his brain impaled on a bed of nails.



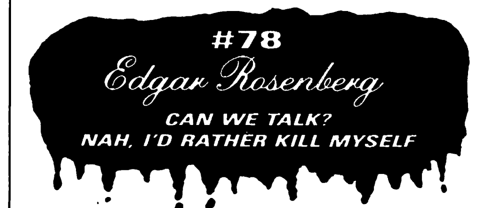
Troubled by "terrific headaches," Jud W. Clark of Culver City, California, sent a .32-caliber analgesic through his brain on October 21, 1921.



Louis Larocque of Port Jefferson, New York, said to be maddened by headaches and pain in his left ear, commanded his chauffeur to drive him to a local pier at around three-thirty a.m. on August 6, 1913. While the chauffeur waited, Larocque took a long walk off the short pier.



Nashville resident Irene McDowell, forty-five, set herself ablaze on New Year's Day, 1966, explaining in a note that she couldn't bear the pain of a chronic toothache.



There's no business like schmoe business. At age sixty-two, Edgar Rosenberg felt as if he had been kicked in the *schmeckel* by a callous entertainment industry. As he saw it, they had chewed him up and spit him out like a day-old potato knish. What was he—chopped liver?



Edgar was a man who had chosen to live behind the scenes, a sour little nebbish who managed the career of his wife, plastic-surgery robot Joan Rivers. He was an anomaly in Hollywood, someone who preferred reading books to smoking crack. "Edgar loved to have us all sitting in the kitchen, eating leftover caviar and crackers and talking about literature and our lives," recalled his close friend Vincent Price. "He loved Fabergé eggs all covered with diamonds but also loved perfectly cooked rice pudding. That was the dichotomy of his character." What a dirty old goat!

He married Joan only four days after meeting her in July, 1965, and promoted her from nightclub nobody to America's Biggest Chick Comic. But Edgar's go-go temperament eventually caught up with him. While arguing with Joan in 1984 about their daughter Melissa's college plans, he had a jumbo heart attack which sent him into a two-week coma. "I caused Edgar's heart attack," Joan would later joke in her saucy stand-up routine. "We were making love, and I took the bag off my head!" Edgar eventually emerged from the coma but later fell victim to a hernia, gout, a bleeding ulcer, and a cancerous growth in his mouth caused by his nervous habit of chewing at the insides of his cheeks.

But the death blow came after what should have been the highlight of both his and Joan's careers. In 1986, the embryonic Fox network signed Joan to do *The Late Show*, a nocturnal hour of celebrity palaver. But almost from the get-go, network executives seemed to view Edgar as a meddler, a busybody, a pushy male yenta. In March, 1987, he was unceremoniously booted in the *tuchis* and banished from the set. Two months later, Joan was axed. Industry pundits blamed Edgar. Even Edgar blamed Edgar.



On Wednesday, August 14, while on business in Philadelphia, he phoned Joan from his hotel room and told her he was going to kill himself. "Don't do it 'til Friday," she fired back, "because Thursday I'm having liposuction." Edgar reportedly chuckled at Joan's barb.

A few hours later, he sat down and recorded three cassette tapes: one for Joan, one for Melissa, and one for business associate Thomas Pileggi. He arranged his business papers, placed Joan and Melissa's tapes in separate envelopes he had marked with the three-kiss shorthand of "XXX," packed his suitcases, and swallowed a fatal dose of Valium. He then ambled over to his room's mini-bar and belted down the contents of a few of those pocket-sized liquor bottles often found on airplanes.

Joan claimed to have been immobilized by Edgar's death, but a few insensitive tabloids commented that she seemed to be handling the news quite well, almost *too* well. She tearfully denied their allegations. The gravel-throated funny lady has bounced back, probably because most of her body is made of rubbery space-age polymers.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpts from the transcription of the tape Edgar made for Joan):
I cannot bear to be a fifth wheel. I know this is not your fault. I had the heart attack, and I'm a changed person. But believe me, when I fought, I fought for you.... If somebody had not been the bastard, you might have been cut up like a salami.... It's very hard for me to show emotion, but you made those twenty-two years a heaven for me. I miss you desperately, and I love you.



#79
Gregg Sanders
ONE DEMERIT OVER THE LINE

He was a good student, but not a great one. His grades were above average, but they weren't exceptional. The tragedy, as Gregg's parents constantly reminded him, is that he was capable of doing better. His performance was *OK*, but great men never settle for OK. He seemed happy just to get by. Poor Gregg, always settling for second-best. He should have applied himself more. He should have pushed a little harder. He should have cracked open a few more books. He should have burned a little more of the midnight oil. He should have been more like his older sister, the class valedictorian. Now *there* was a student.

Maybe it was too much pressure for a fifteen-year-old Jersey kid to handle. Still, Gregg couldn't let his parents down. He had to set higher goals. He had to model himself after someone who groped for perfection with unblinking discipline. He had to imitate... Adolf Hitler. When Gregg was feeling all alone, he'd crawl through a cramped passageway leading from his bedroom into the attic. That's where he kept his armbands, his swastikas, his collection of quotations from the fearsome dictator. That's where, if only fleetingly, he tasted excellence.

Outside that tiny attic, Gregg felt horribly flawed. He seemed destined to fail. When a history teacher at his exclusive prep school threatened to give him a demerit for talking in class on January 10, 1975, Gregg knew that his parents would be notified by mail. He didn't think they'd be able to handle another disappointment. He confided to a friend that he had three choices: "I can beat up the teacher, I can intercept the letter, or I can kill myself." Since the teacher was a former boxer, Gregg ruled out that option. His parents sometimes arrived home before he did, so intercepting the letter might be difficult. That left only one choice.

On the evening of January 14, while Gregg's father was busy in the kitchen going over some bank reports, Gregg crept up from behind and whacked him repeatedly in the head with a two-foot axe. He then charged into the dining room and hacked his mother to pieces. Bolting from the house, Gregg sprinted a half-mile through fifteen-degree weather to a local water tower. He scaled its one-hundred-and-fifty-foot spiral staircase, from atop which one could see Manhattan's lights. Gregg probably killed himself in the manner he once told a friend he would: He climbed over the eight-foot security fence which rimmed the tower's top. Then, hanging by one hand from the ledge, he used his free hand to slash the wrist which still held on, causing him to fall to his death in the quiet white snow. Gregg knew that he had to do what he

did. If his parents had found out about that demerit, it would have killed them, anyway.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Left under a paperweight on his bedroom desk):

To whom it may concern:

I am sorry for the trouble I have caused. I'm not in any way mad at my parents. I just can't take it anymore. Well, I just wanted to say I'm sorry.

Good Luck,
Gregg Sanders.

#80
Sappho
QUEEN OF ALL VULVAS

This lute-strumming lyricist's all-girl pajama parties were so steamy, an entire sexual orientation was named after the island on which they took place. Born around 612 B.C., Sappho will forever be known as the top lesbo of Lesbos. Deeming her poetry "a threat to public morals," the Greek church would later burn all but five percent of her writings, but what remains paints a portrait of one hot little minx. She wrote unashamedly of "the sweet apple which reddens upon the topmost bough... [the] golden chickpea growing on the seashore... the wild hyacinth which on the mountainside the shepherd treads underfoot, yet it still blooms purple on the ground." Sounds like PUSSY to me. But what could have possibly been contained in the ninety-five percent that was destroyed? Lurid descriptions of violet-scented maidens eating stuffed grape leaves out of each other's assholes? Cluster-fucks using painted vases as dildos? The infamous Athenian Olive-Oil Massage? Many accounts describe Sappho as a dwarfish hag in dire need of electrolysis, so she must have had a tongue that could wash a school bus in three minutes.


Sappho: partial to seafood.

SUICIDE

But her diet didn't consist exclusively of raw clams. In fact, she married early in life and gave birth to a daughter named Kleis. As Sappho reached her fifties, with her ladies-only poetry classes disbanded and her sweet juices swiftly drying into crust, she once again felt the lure of the naked mole rat. She fell like a schoolgirl for a sailor named Phaon, a bronze-skinned, cock-slinging, gyro-belching Grecian stud. Phaon gave her a few token fucks but left the island without saying goodbye. Perhaps he had left on business, perhaps in exodus from Sappho's overweening passion. Sappho was incredulous at the word of his departure. Her dark-green skin blanched. Since Phaon's boat was said to be headed for Sicily, she tortured herself with thoughts that he was balling all the Italian chicks. She tossed and turned. Finally, she boarded a ship bound for Corinth, hoping to connect with a boat for Sicily. When her ship stopped at the island of Leucas, Sappho disembarked. She walked to a grassy mesa above the white-stone cliffs. Probably realizing that it was futile to chase after a younger man, she broke into a gallop and threw herself down into the Mediterranean. Her body washed ashore and was supposedly cremated and shipped back to the Lesbian city of Mitylene. Hadn't you learned, O daughter of the moon, that a penis bites like a cobra? If you had forsworn men entirely and stuck to hot tuna, you'd have died with a smile on your face and some young nymph licking your bush.

#81
William Sexton
WAKE ME UP WHEN IT'S OVER

Everyone has opened their eyes from a nightmare only to sigh gratefully when they peer around the room and realize that their life is duller than their subconscious fantasies. But since dreams can affect the body as powerfully as wide-awake stimuli, they can't be dismissed as totally unreal. Sexual material beamed onto a sleeping male adolescent's brain pan can trigger actual orgasm. Although it's impossible to prove, it's a common belief that a person will die from shock if they fall out of bed while dreaming that they're falling. Then there's that creepy twilight area, not really asleep and not really awake, where the id's unclean spirits merge with the physical ability to do damage.

A knock on the bedroom door awoke William Sexton's sister late one night in June of 1844. The Bedfordshire, England, woman walked to the door and opened it, finding William's dark silhouette standing there quietly. He said not a word, instead pointing to his throat. His sister pressed her fingers to it, recoiling at the warm, moist feeling of blood. She called for a doctor, who bandaged William's wound. Still unable to speak, William wrote down on paper what had happened. He had been dreaming that a policeman was threatening to place him in the stocks. In his dream, Sexton told the officer that he'd rather slice his own throat than suffer such humiliation. When the cop lunged toward Sexton to apprehend him, Sexton, in an apparent sleepwalking state, grabbed his penknife and slit his own jugular vein. He later died as a result of blood loss.



Charles Moseley, a clerk at the Bank of England, had a recurring dream that the police were after him for forgery. Moseley apparently was an honest worker who had no reason to be paranoid, but he couldn't escape the dream. At around four o'clock one morning in November, 1855, after having his sleep disrupted several times from the same dream, he awoke running from his bed. His wife chased after him. Moseley reached the kitchen, pulled out a butcher knife, and cut open his belly so deeply that a section of his intestines popped out. In the throes of mania, he sliced off a chunk of intestine and would have kept going, but a policeman arrived and restrained him. Moseley died three hours later.



Sleeping on a bus as it cruised through Virginia late in 1931, Arthur Fournier was apparently dreaming that he was on a ship, because he suddenly sprung up, screamed, "She's sinking! Jump for your lives!" and dove out a window to his death.



Rock critics don't usually care for the very early sixties, but rock critics are dicks. That's why no one respects them except other rock critics. The pop music which spanned Kennedy's administration had lost rockabilly's rhythm and hadn't yet discovered the power chord, leaving only greasy, trebly tales of betrayal. High-pitched losers such as Gene Pitney and Lou Christie waxed echoey testaments to pimply love which were weirder than Pink Floyd could ever hope to be. One of the best examples of such maudlin operettas was Del Shannon's 1961 smash

Del Shannon: goat killer?

"Runaway." Over a frantic calypso beat and hypercaffeinated organ solo, Del's gerbilish vocals hit those high notes like someone was clamping down on his sack with a set of ice tongs. Jerky Del wandered around in a rainstorm, bawling his eyes out, wondering why "she" ran away.

Because you're an UGLY cocksucker, Del. Your face scared her off. I mean, put a couple bolts in your neck, and who needs Boris Karloff? You look like something that lives under bridges and kills goats.

And Del sang as if he knew it. On subsequent tunes such as "Hats off to Larry" and "Little Town Flirt," he proved a master of homely-guy pathos, his crumbly squeak of a voice expressing a near-comic level of emotional pain. It was easy to picture him as Charles Weedon Westover, the lonely Michigan carpet-store clerk who got one lucky break. He was the sort of kid who received wedgies in the high-school locker room and ate his lunch all alone.

As the sixties grew shaggier, Del's slippery sound stopped selling records. He found himself all alone again, doing battle with the hackneyed "personal demons." He staggered around in a dark home studio he called "the mole hole," washing down pills with whiskey chasers. "When I was twenty I was drinking," he told a reporter, "and when I was thirty I was drinking more, and at forty way too much." At fifty-five, he had failed in several comeback attempts and was forced to butter his bread as a living mannequin on the oldies circuit. On February 9, 1990, he took a .22-caliber rifle and made that face even uglier. His wife blamed his suicide on a temporary manic phase induced by the antidepressant drug Prozac. But maybe Del had simply taken a long, sobering look in the mirror.



Stephan Simon had two problems: First, he was a gravedigger, and second, no one would fuck him because of it. The maidens of Gross-Becakerek, Czechoslovakia, didn't want a man coming home from work all muddy, smelling like embalming fluid and worms. They couldn't stomach having a husband toiling all day among corpses and then coming home to jump their bones. They would not lie fallow and permit him to sink his tombstone into them. They refused to be another burial plot for him to plow. In his years as the local sexton, he had buried many of his best friends. That, combined with the fact that his vocation made him a social leper, probably lent him more affinity for the dead than the living. So one day under the cruel grey autumn sky of 1933, he decided that he should join his friends six feet under. Using his shovel for the last time, he dug a fresh grave. He then descended into the moist soil and killed himself. The newspapers don't specify which method he used, but at least he spared his townsmen the annoyance of buying a casket.



In 1970, Jean Devlin of Newbury, England, dug her own burial pit, took an overdose of drugs, and jumped in. After she expired, her sister Pauline covered her with dirt.



As a self-appointed savior to the homeless, Mitch Snyder's contempt for an unfeeling society radiated like the rotting-cabbage smell which rolled off his torso. With boogers hanging out of his nose, he denounced America as "one of the most heinous cultures the world has ever seen." To make Americans feel guilty for this, he marched through Washington, D.C.'s streets carrying a coffin and throwing blood on a federal building's walls. Twisting the government's arm to pay attention to him and his shelter-deprived brethren, he staged high-profile hunger strikes, some lasting several weeks. Even when he didn't have to, he slept outside on steam grates, picked through dumpsters, and frightened people who worked for a living. Martin Sheen, who portrayed Mitch in a 1986 TV-movie called *Samaritan: The Mitch Snyder Story*, called him a "saint." When asked to defend his actions, Mitch would respond with a self-effacing shrug and a simple "God told me to." Posing for pictures, he would choose dramatic lighting and stare off-camera with sanctimonious disdain for a world which owed him a living.

In effect, he was demanding that society do for him everything that he failed to do for his own wife and kids. Because while Mitch Snyder was a champion of the homeless, he was a chump to his own family. Although he had no physical handicaps, Mitch couldn't manage his own dick or hold down a job. Born in Brooklyn, Mitch was only nine when his father abandoned his family. "I grew up swearing never, ever to do to my kids what my father had done to me," he would later say. As he pubesced, he dropped out of high school and earned spare cash by busting into parking meters. He apparently spent the money on himself, because when he and his girlfriend went to the movies, she usually had to pay. She married him anyway and popped out two of his rug rats. To feed the family, Mitch graduated from parking meters to check forgery. In 1969, six years after he was married, he did what he had sworn never, ever to do: He split town with a check-forging buddy and left the family hanging. A year later, he was nabbed in Vegas for auto theft and got sent up for a three-year stretch.

His long-suffering wife still visited him every two weeks, only to find that Mitch had transformed from Johnny Palooka to St. Francis of Assisi. Having fallen under the spell of fellow cons Daniel and Philip Berrigan, the famous radical Catholic priests, Mitch started fasting to protest America's use of "tiger cages" in Vietnam. Mitch said he got a "sense of power" from his hunger strike. When he got out of prison, he told the wife and kids to go fuck themselves—there were people who *needed* him, and his family didn't seem to appreciate that. His wife saw nothing of Mitch until twelve years later, when she chanced upon a *60 Minutes* episode profiling the selfless Samaritan.

Curiously, when Mitch Snyder fastened an electrical cord around his neck and hanged himself in July, 1990, his suicide note made no mention of the starving millions whose cross he had borne since the mid-seventies. Instead, it reportedly bitched about the fact that Carol Fennelly, a woman who helped Mitch ladle creamed corn to street bums for years, didn't love him as much as he loved her. Snyder's body was found swinging in his private bedroom in a twelve-hundred-bed shelter. He had virtually blackmailed Ronald Reagan into donating the shelter during a highly publicized fifty-one-day fast. Down amid the twelve hundred beds, God's little lambs smoked crack, sold their bodies for heroin, and knocked each other unconscious for pocket change.



Mitch Snyder: aromatic homeless activist.

#85 Stockbrokers During the Great Depression

BULLISH ON SUICIDE

The image of Wall Street brokers swan-diving off skyscraper ledges in October, 1929, is a marvelous American spectacle, right up there with the Hindenburg's crash or the Kent State massacre. Jealous pricks that we are, we enjoy it when the rich are brought down to earth, whether figuratively or—SMACK!—literally.

The "Black Thursday" (October 24) and "Black Tuesday" (October 29) stock-market crashes represented a young nation's first nervous breakdown. As the ticker tape began spewing death notices, speculators ran into the streets with the aimless frenzy of ants who had been feeding on a dead mouse, only to have it taken away from them. Rope-twirling hayseed Will Rogers happened to be in the Wall Street area on Black Thursday, which he called "Wailing Day." He also fueled the myth of free-falling financiers: "When Wall Street took that tailspin, you had to stand in line to get a window to jump out of, and speculators were selling space for bodies in the East River."

Would that it were so, but only two Wall Street nose-dives have been positively linked to the crash, and one was that of a lowly fifty-one-year-old clerical worker named Hulda Borowski. However, New York newspapers in the days directly following Black Thursday report an unusually high number of "accidental" falls. Alleged to be violently ill from some clam chowder he had eaten for lunch, thirty-four-year-old lawyer Chester Solez "lost his balance" when he stuck his head out for some fresh air on October 25. On the same day, another lawyer named Bernard Queller fell eleven stories "as he jumped to unwind the cord



October 29, 1929: a bevy of batty brokers.

of a window shade." On October 27, octogenarian Esther Mack "either jumped or fell" from her Upper West Side apartment, smearing the sidewalk with old-lady guts.

Fortunately, several of the financially ruined found other methods to end their lives. Having lost over a million in the crash, the president of the Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation inhaled a fatal amount of his own company's gas. With his small fortune whittled down to four cents, Wellington Lytle blew out his brains on December 7 in his Milwaukee hotel room. His suicide note willed that "my body should go to science, my soul to Andrew W. Mellon, and sympathy to my creditors." Stock-related suicides were recorded as far away as Chile, Cuba, and all over Europe. In America, the trend grew as the Depression deepened. By 1934, insurance companies were inundated with suicide claims, with one firm moaning that "in nearly every instance, the motive has been 'wiped out in the stock market.'"

Dead stockbrokers. Serves them right for fucking up the country with their rodentlike greed. If they hadn't jumped, somebody should have pushed them.



On October 26, 1987, a week after the market lost five hundred and eight points in a single day, Miami stock speculator Arthur Kane walked into his local Merrill Lynch office with a .357 Magnum and shot two brokers before taking his own life.



It was a crime which scared the khaki slacks off white America: A young Boston couple, their skin as light as vanilla yogurt, were returning from a Lamaze class on the dark side of town when a black thug forced his way into their car. He made them drive to an industrial area, where he stole their watches, jewelry, and cash. The assailant panicked when he noticed a cellular phone, accusing the couple of being police. "I think you're Five-O," he said, then blasted them with a .38 snubby and ran away.

"My wife's been shot; I've been shot," gasped Charles Stuart over his car phone to State Police that night in October, 1989. Dazed and bloody, Stuart pulled out a second set of keys and zipped around the dangerous neighborhood until he pulled over and lost consciousness.

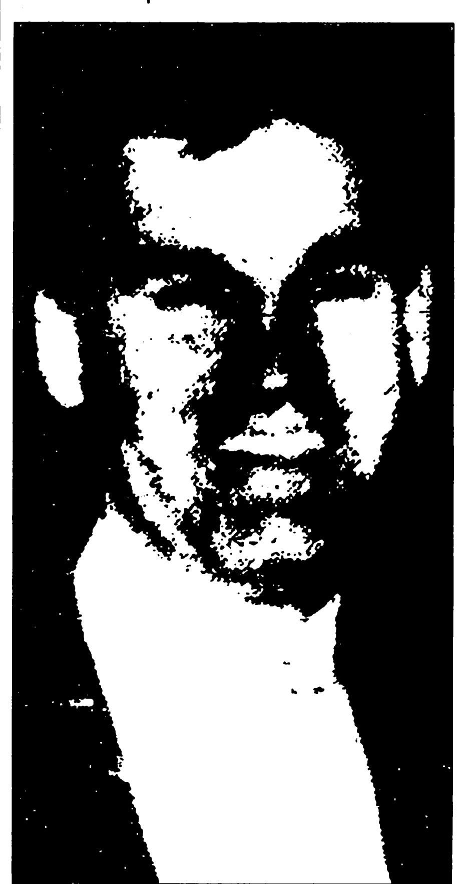
"Stay with me, Chuck.... I need you, man," said a desperate police dispatcher. Cops finally found the couple and raced them to a hospital, where doctors prematurely plucked a four-pound baby from Carol Stuart's dying vagina. Six hours later, Carol croaked. Her scrawny infant was placed in an incubator, and its father was admitted to intensive care.

"Now you sleep away from me," wrote a gravely wounded Charles Stuart in a statement read aloud at Carol's funeral. "I will never again know the feeling of your hand in mine, but I will always feel you. I miss you and I love you." Regarding Carol's killer, he said, "In our souls we must forgive this sinner because [God] would, too." Seventeen days after the shooting, when newborn Christopher Stuart was a few hours from death, his distraught daddy requested to be wheeled up to the incubator so he could say goodbye.

Beantown crackers were appalled that the young couple, who typified the tight-assed aura of vintage yuppiedom, had fallen prey to yet another black psychopath. Indignant palefaces vowed on TV cameras to "nev-ah go in-tah Bah-ston ahf-tah dahk again." You could sense their fear of tribal drums and fires crackling under cannibal kettles. They castigated the anonymous flat-nosed hoodlum who had caused the death of the Stuarts' Howdy Doody baby. Within hours of the shooting, police were swarming all over Boston's Mission Hill district, interrogating every black male in sight. State legislators were calling for the institution of the death penalty. A group of Boston business leaders offered a fifteen-thousand-dollar reward for information leading to the killer's arrest and conviction. In mid-November, a black drifter named William Bennett was apprehended and charged with the crime. Shortly before Christmas, a gallant Chuck Stuart checked out of the hospital and went to his parents' house for some much-deserved rest. Eighty-two thousand dollars from his wife's insurance policy helped ease the pain a bit, but it wouldn't bring Carol back.

The case seemed resolved until early January. Stuart's brother Matthew, after being assured he was immune from prosecution, dropped a bomb on the lap of Boston police: Charles Stuart shot his wife and then himself, concocting the black-guy story because he knew people would swallow it. Matthew had helped Charles plan Carol's murder, conducting a dry run the night before the shooting and driving by Chuck's car moments after the killing so Chuck could pass him the gun.

Charles Stuart somehow received word that his sibling had turned stoolie. On the morning of January 4, 1990, he drove his spanking-new Nissan Maxima—a car he had purchased with Carol's insurance money and trade-in credit from the vehicle in which he killed her—to Boston's Tobin Bridge, left the engine running, and leapt one hundred and forty-nine feet into the icy Mystic River. There were later rumors of an additional insurance policy and a leggy blonde chick who kept visiting Chuck while he was in the hospital.



Hey, Chuck, who was that lady I saw you killing last night?

"That was no lady—that was my wife!"

Police released murder suspect William Bennett, who claimed that his life had been destroyed. A sheepish Mayor Raymond Flynn apologized to Mission Hill's blacks. He paid a quick visit to the Bennett household, pissing the family off further because he didn't even stay long enough to sit down.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Excerpts from a note found in his car):

I love my family....The last four months have been real hell....All the allegations have taken my strength.

#87
Harry Swart
IMPROPER USE OF THE HANDICAPPED RAMP

Harry Swart didn't feel like playing bingo with amputees for the rest of his life. At forty-five, he had spent nine years as basically a house pet of the Chicago Home for Incurables. Paralyzed from the waist down, he was unable to stray more than a yard or two without unbearable pain. He tired of the smell of pine cleaner, the pitter-patter of slippers on linoleum, the all-night wailing of the infirm. It was beneath his dignity to endure the patronizing pats on the head from health-care workers, to be lowered into the bathtub by fat attendants, to have three people in white jackets wait outside the toilet stall while he took a dump. It was enough.

Using all the strength he could muster, Harry rolled out of the home in a wheelchair a few minutes after high noon on May 21, 1921. Slick with sweat, he spun the chair's wheels thirteen blocks to the Jackson Park pier on Lake Michigan. Then, with health attendants chasing at his numb heels, he wheeled himself straight into the water. Glub, glub, glub, no more pain.

#88
Jacques Vaché
DADA'S DADA IS DEAD-DEAD

Because he loved guns and hated people, Jacques Vaché can be forgiven for being French. Because his last "performance" gesture was to kill himself and two of his friends, we can overlook the fact that he was a flouncy boozhwah art boy.

A supposed influence on André Breton and subsequent froggy poop-slingers, Vaché's *schtique* was "attaching very little importance to anything." He adhered to a doctrine he called *umore,* meaning that the deeply perceptive are able to find comic value in life's uselessness. Breton met him in an infirmary in 1916 and was fascinated with how Vaché, recovering from a calf wound, could spend hours arranging and rearranging a few flowers and pictures on a lace-covered night table. Vaché spurned work after his leg mended, preferring to don soldier or aviator costumes and stroll the streets of Nantes refusing to acknowledge his friends. He is probably best known for taunting theater patrons with a loaded revolver.

"I object to being killed in the war," he wrote from the front before being wounded in WWI. "I shall die when I want to die, and then I shall die with somebody else. To die alone is boring. I should prefer to die with one of my best friends." In 1919, not long after the war ended, a twenty-three-year-old Vaché invited a pair of his closest friends over for tea. Without their knowledge, he slipped fatal doses of opium in their beverages and sprinkled a like amount in his own drink. It was a brilliant final act, one that more artists should imitate.

Lotsa dead Frenchmen: Jacques Vaché's depiction of World War I's carnage.



#89
Vincent Van Gogh
EAR'S TO YOU

Pauvre, pauvre Vincent. Teeny-weeny baby-waby got a big bad bruise on his heart. Those bad, bad, stinky people made you cry. You is a big blue pretty bird, and the bad people are jealous that they can't fly. They gang up and say naughty things about you. They killed you like the Romans killed Jesus.

BLOW ME, Vincent. Isn't it time we stopped making excuses for the "creative" among us? Van Gogh did some OK things with color, but he was a flat-out jerkoff to those around him. Sure, it's mildly tragic that he only sold one painting in his life, but maybe that was because his personality was as repellent as the sperm a Doberman leaves on your leg after humping it. Yet people insist on viewing Van Gogh as a

suicide

"holy fool." In a nauseating song tribute, Don "American Pie" McLean consoles the painter, assuring him that "this world was never meant for one as beautiful as you." Vincent's *dead*, Don. He can't *hear* you.

The ditzy Dutchman was born in 1853, a grumpy, freckled little boy rarely known for smiling. Beleaguered with the appearance of a constipated Franciscan monk, the young Van Gogh trudged through the peaks and valleys of religious mania. He had his first mental collapse in his twenties when he was rejected by Eugénie Loyer, a woman whose face could stew asparagus. Never one for moderation, he turned from Christ to the clap, going through hookers as if his dick was a paintbrush. He contracted gonorrhea and later syphilis, his diseased tinkler at one point requiring catheterization. Foul moods and burgeoning alcoholism caused an ulcer to blossom in his knotted stomach.

By the time Paul Gauguin came to stay with him in 1888, Vincent was as pleasant as boiled vomit. Enraged at Gauguin's portrait of him, which Vincent felt made him look insane, he hurled a glass of the narcotic beverage absinthe at his painter friend. One evening, as Gauguin was taking his nightly constitutional, he turned around to find Van Gogh coming at him with a razor. Failing to inflict any damage on Gauguin, the gutless Dutch boy scampered away. At about eleven-thirty that evening, Van Gogh walked into a local whorehouse with a bloodied towel wrapped around his head and asked for a woman named Rachel. When she appeared, he handed her a package wrapped in newspaper, instructing her to "guard this object carefully." He then left. Rachel unwrapped the little love offering, only to find the lower portion of Vincent's left ear.

Returning home the next morning after what he thought was an appropriate cooling-off period, Gauguin discovered blood sloshed all over the house and Vinny lying near death. Van Gogh, catatonic from the trauma, was sent away to an asylum. Gauguin packed his bags and eventually moved to balmier climes.

Doctors at the asylum diagnosed Van Gogh as "suffering from acute mania with hallucinations of sight and hearing . . . [and] epileptic fits at very infrequent intervals." His memory shot, his brain as soft as a month-old banana, Vincent thrice attempted suicide at the hospital. Two of the attempts involved swallowing his own paint. "The thing is that my head is so bad," he wrote to his brother Theo, "without pain it is true, but altogether stupefied."

When he returned to his "Yellow House" after his release, he tried drinking turpentine but was restrained by a friend. By this time, the townsfolk of Arles had turned completely against him. Neighbors spread rumors that he fondled women. The kids threw things at him. A boy villager claimed to have espied Vincent jerking off in the woods.

After eating lunch at an inn on July 27, 1890, the psycho expressionist hiked to a spot above Auvers, armed with his painting kit and a revolver he had been using to shoo away meddlesome crows. He placed his easel against a haystack and shot himself in the chest, wobbling back to the inn and crawling up the stairs into bed. The innkeepers found him curled up in the fetal position. A small hole near his heart was surrounded by bold, swirling globs of red and purple. Doctors pronounced his condition as hopeless. Infection had set in by the next day, leaving the mad aesthete gurgling for each breath. His brother visited at around noon. While Theo cradled Vincent's head in his arms, the wounded *artiste* looked up and said, "I wish I could pass away like this." His wish came true a half-hour later. Since his death was ruled a suicide, the Catholic church refused to say mass for his soul, meaning that Van Gogh now roasts in hell.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Supposedly written to his brother):
Well, my own work, I am risking my life for it, and my reason has half-foundered because of it—that's alright—but you are not among the dealers in men as far as I know, and you can still choose your side, I think, acting with humanity, but what do you want?

#90
Vatel
COULDN'T HE HAVE ORDERED A DOMINO'S PIZZA?

As head chef for France's foo-foo Prince de Condé, *le grand Vatel* was moronically proud. When King Louis XV came to visit the prince for a three-day blowout in April of 1761, Vatel sweated over every subatomic detail. He neurotically prepared a venison feast on the first night of the king's visit, a meal over which Louie Louie slobbered with praise. Vatel couldn't relax, though, sleeping not a wink that evening. At around eight the next morning, as Vatel punctiliously readied for lunch, he flipped his powdered wig when he mistakenly thought that there wouldn't be enough fish to go around. Fatally ashamed that His Majesty would have no seafood, Vatel went to his bedroom and impaled himself on a sword. The fish arrived an hour later.



Petrified with guilt over having smashed his employer's automobile, the chauffeur of Parisian businessman Georges Menier drowned himself in March, 1921.



Goghing, Goghing, Gone.

SUICIDE NOTE:

(Menier's chauffeur):
Monsieur: You entrusted your new car to me, and I have had the misfortune to damage it irreparably. I cannot survive such disaster.

#91
Popo Walker
PRE-PUBE COUP DE GRÂCE

Children, those little cocksuckers, can be so cruel. They'll tease and taunt and bully and berate you to the point of tears. And when you cry, they'll tease you more loudly. As soon as they find your weakness, they'll strike like wolves. They'll make fun of your face, your hair, the way you walk, the things you say. With little eight-year-old Popo Walker of Lakeland, Florida, it was his name. Poo-Poo. Pee-Pee. Popeye. When Popo told his aunt about it, she complained to North Lakeland Elementary School's principal. Realizing they'd better lay off his name, Popo's classmates came up with a new prank. Wouldn't it be funny if they blamed him for filching four bucks from the teacher's pocketbook? Popo didn't laugh. Neither did the teacher or the principal, who told Popo they believed that he was innocent. Popo wasn't impressed. He told his dad he wasn't going back to school. In November, 1984, he strapped a belt to his bunk bed and hanged himself because of four dollars, fifty cents for every year of his life.



Eleven-year-old Ian Storey of Bramhall, England, hanged himself from his bunk bed with a judo belt in 1991 after his mom punished him by sending him to his room an hour earlier than usual.



In April, 1858, ten-year-old Adam Commelin hanged himself with his neckerchief in a Scottish jail after receiving a forty-day sentence for stealing six Swedish turnips.



Eight-year-old Girard Lyons of Buffalo, New York, hanged himself with his necktie on a pair of coat hooks in his school's cloakroom on March 20, 1930. The teacher had sent him to the cloakroom as punishment for his "unruly" behavior.





Twelve-year-old "boy genius" Stephen John Fairweather of South Wales hanged himself in the spring of 1975. He was reportedly disgusted with the fact that his mother didn't clean the house.



Ten-year-old Rachel Greenberg of Great Neck, New York, hanged her Little Neck with a jump-rope in March, 1986. No reason was given.



Eleven-year-old Paul Witte of Manhattan, afraid that his father would whip him for cutting class, swallowed a fatal dose of "Rough on Rats" on June 20, 1888.



The ten-year-old son of a London carpenter named Clark stabbed himself to death in May, 1787, after his parents upbraided him for stealing a halfpenny.



Eleven-year-old Donyelle McCall of Ontario, California, shot herself with a .25-caliber pistol in April, 1985. The apparent reason was that her father had grounded Donyelle after finding her with a cigarette.

SUICIDE NOTE:

Mom, I didn't want to live to tell about this, so good-by [sic]. Come visit my funeral if I have one.

—Donyelle McCall

I died at 11 a.m.

Dad would probably put me on a year's restriction. Don't put this in the newspaper.

Oh, yeah, I forgot to tell you I used the gun—yours. I'm sorry you don't have a daughter anymore. I didn't want to hurt you like this, but I didn't want to go through it. I wanted to grow up and be somebody, but now that I'm dead I have to go down.

I know you love me, but I don't want to tell my friends.

I love you so much, but I messed up. I know that I have to live with it, but the way dad walked out of here, I can't get over it. I wish we could just forget about it, but it's not that easy.

#92
Doodles Weaver
MY, WHAT A DOODLED WEB WE WEAVE

In a wild world of wacky comedians, Doodles Weaver was the absolute zaniest, nuttiest, koo-koo-ka-jookiest of them all. Born Winstead Sheffield Weaver to a wealthy L.A. family who thought he resembled a doodlebug, he was a joker almost from the moment he popped out of mom's snatch. He was ALWAYS joking. The goofy gagster even slept beneath a photo of Christ which bore the inscription, "To Doodles, from J.C." As a nightclub comic, he told rib-ticklers such as, "You know how to milk a mouse? First, you get a small stool. . . ." In the late forties, madcap musician Spike Jones discovered Doodles in a club and made him part of his Musical Depreciation Revue. Audiences couldn't contain themselves over Weaver's classic "Feetlebaum" routine, a mythic horse race recited to the strains of "The William Tell Overture": "It's Shirt Tail hanging out in front. . . . Suspenders is bringing up the rear. . . . Lighter Fluid is really burning up the

track." People went bananas over his phony ads for "Pootwaddle" car polish. Describing his act, Doodles said, "I'd hit my nose with a microphone and then start a song and get all mixed up with the words." Wherever Doodles went, giggles weren't far behind. He was Mr. Chuckles.

After parting with Spike Jones in the early fifties, Doodles went on to host television programs such as *The Doodles Weaver Show, A Day With Doodles,* and *Doodles's Club House.* Then one day in January, 1982, the whimsical jester shot himself twice in the chest with a .22-caliber rifle, spraying Honkwinkles and Flibberdegoops all over his Burbank house.



Doodles Weaver: too fucking funny.





#93 John Webster
SHEAR MADNESS

Few things bite a bigger bone than the deathbed conversion of someone who had otherwise bullied his way through this world with unpenitent violence. You have to negatively reevaluate the accomplishments of someone such as Ted Bundy, who bludgeoned countless women without blinking but then, as he faced the electric chair, backpedaled and said that smut rags had driven him to his deeds. Ted's status wouldn't have suffered if he had remained steadfast and admitted that he smacked his lips over a good bitch-clubbing.

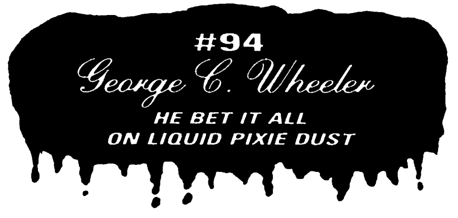
John Webster was no such shrinking violet. He chose to kiss off with the same brute ferocity in which he had lived his short, savage life. He seemed not at all bothered that he had once sent a horse and cart careening over a cliff, fatally squashing a man standing on the ground below. And when the hardcore alcoholic from Leicester County, England, was tossed in jail toward the end of 1870 for thrashing the piss out of his wife, it was just another Friday night. One can reasonably infer that his suicide wasn't prompted by concern for his battered spouse's well-being. Rather, it was pure selfishness, a quick way to quell his own misery.

Or maybe he just didn't like to bathe. When a prison guard brought him into a room for a procedural hosing-down, Webster snatched a pair of scissors which were laying on a table and plunged them into his own neck. When the guard tried to stop him, Webster ripped a gas bracket off the wall and started swinging at him. With his other hand, he kept skewering his own throat with the shears. The guard ran for assistance and came back with another guard, only to find that Webster had forced the scissors all the way through his neck, with their bloody tip protruding through the other side. After a struggle, the two officers were able to pin Webster down. They removed the scissors from his throat and hurled Webster into solitary confinement. When they returned with a doctor, Webster had plunged his fingers deep into the holes on both ends of his throat. He was trying to forcibly remove his own larynx. The rock-ribbed lunatic died within an hour.



HONORABLE MENTION

In the same year as Webster's self-tracheotomy, a gal named Baker from Rochester, England, axed herself to death with one shot to the head, splitting her noggin open to the brain.



#94 George C. Wheeler
HE BET IT ALL ON LIQUID PIXIE DUST

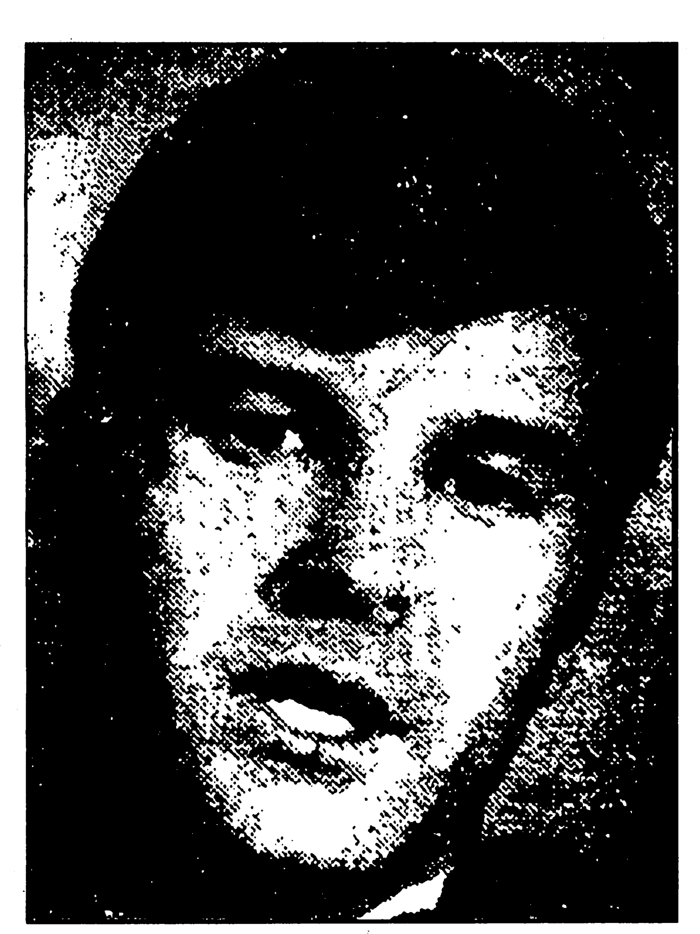
When police found George C. Wheeler in March, 1877, his brains were dripping out of his skull. He had placed his head in a trough connected to a murderous machine of his own making. After he had activated the device, a series of springs, pulleys, and gears set a large wheel spinning over his head. Attached to Wheeler's wheel were an axe-head and numerous small blades. For at least ten minutes, the machine hacked deep ridges into his cranium.

Despite his barbarous death, the Dundee, Michigan, resident wasn't strictly suicidal, for he had devised a second invention which he was certain would counteract the effects of the first. A twenty-two-year-old who was said to look thirty-five, Wheeler dodged social interaction in favor of ceaseless futzing with his chemistry set. In the six months prior to his demise, he had developed a chemical solution which he was sure would garner him worldwide adulation. It would undoubtedly be the greatest discovery in the history of man. He called it his "creative, all-changeful material assistant," a few drops of which would bring any dead body roaring back to life. In his precocious senility, Wheeler believed that a dram of this concoction would breathe the ghost back into his brutalized corpse. He placed a bottle of the solution next to his death machine with instructions that an acquaintance of his should sprinkle some over his cadaver. In fairness to Wheeler, the newspaper account of his suicide leads one to believe that everyone dismissed him as a Fruit Roll-Up and didn't even *try* to use his magic potion.



#95 Dan White
NO MORE TWINKIES

It ain't easy being a homophobe in the city by the bay. Maybe he was born fifty years too late, but Dan White loved Jack London's San Francisco. When he closed his eyes, he saw tugboats and sea gulls, red beards and wool



Dan White delivers yet another diatribe against the evils of petroleum jelly.

sweaters, warm dinner rolls and hot chowder. When he opened his eyes, he saw Sodom. He yearned for the days when the men were men, the women were women, and the anuses were marked EXIT ONLY.

Dan couldn't believe that a Catholic family man such as himself, a former cop, fireman, and Vietnam soldier, was now the odd man out in the city's new amoral climate. So when he got a chance to run for the city's Board of Supervisors, he seized it. "I am not going to be driven out of San Francisco," he vowed in a campaign brochure which bewailed the influx of "radicals, social deviates, and incorrigibles." Dan, a former amateur boxer, was willing to fight for the old values. "You must realize," the brochure went on, "there are thousands upon thousands of frustrated, angry people such as yourself waiting to unleash a fury that can and will eradicate the malignancies which blight our city." The scare tactics worked, and Dan was elected.

But he found himself an unwanted presence in an aggressively liberal city government. As the only Supervisor opposed to gay rights, he was at particular odds with pro-gay Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, generally acknowledged as the country's first out-of-the-closet politician. White quit after less than a year at City Hall, citing his family's inability to survive on the puny salary. But he suddenly changed his mind and asked Moscone to reappoint him. Never fond of Dan, Moscone hedged on giving his answer. White was certain that Moscone and Milk had teamed up to prevent him from coming back. On the morning of November 27, 1978, he paid an unscheduled visit to the mayor's study at City Hall and shot him dead. He reloaded, walked down the corridor, and fired five rounds at Milk, killing him.

Although White hated liberal politics, they worked in his favor during his murder trial. Using the infamous "Twinkie Defense," his lawyer argued that White's rampaging sweet tooth deepened his depression and thus diminished his capacity to make moral decisions. The jury swallowed this load of horseshit and convicted White of voluntary manslaughter instead of first-degree murder. The verdict sparked the "White Night" riot of May 21, 1979, where furious gays threw rocks at City Hall and flaming homosexuals set fire to police cars.

When White was paroled in January, 1984, an estimated nine thousand protestors filled San Francisco's predominantly queer Castro Street. Mayor Dianne Feinstein warned Dan not to return, both for the city's tranquility and his own safety. But after a yearlong parole, Dan was back. He grew facial hair to disguise his appearance and skulked around his neighborhood in a yellow 1970 Le Sabre, always peering over his shoulder. When people approached him and said, "You're Dan White," he'd break into a sweat and reply, "I don't know what you're talking about." Hardcore gay activists slipped threatening notes under his door.

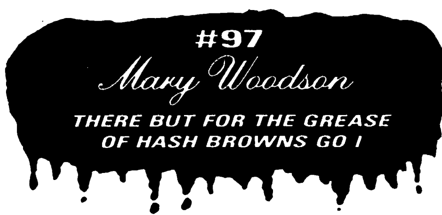
On the morning of October 21, 1985, Dan drove the Le Sabre into his garage and succumbed to sweet monoxide. On his cassette deck was an Irish ballad that included the lyrics, "Oh, my God—what have they done to the town I loved so well?" Down on Castro, a youthful male was seen prancing down the street singing a different tune: "Ding, dong, the wicked witch is dead."



If one were a dialectical materialist, one could view D.R. Widdison's suicide as a trenchant commentary on the alienation of wage-slavery. Obviously believing his role as an industrial pawn to be more important than his status as a human being, his *London Times* obituary referred to him as an "unemployed labourer." In May, 1987, the sixty-one-year-old inhabitant of Newark, England, grabbed a hammer—one-half of the hammer-and-sickle dyad—and drove two five-inch nails into his skull. Scrutinized under the rigors of Hegelian analysis, Widdison's act of self-carpentry might be interpreted as a damning *criticism of a system* which values work more than it values the worker. But we prefer to dispense with such fucked-up logic. To us, he was merely a bleedin' loony.



Reflecting a technological innovation which renders workers even more useless, Raymond Farrell of London died in August, 1992, after shooting himself in the head with a nail gun.



If there's a thin line between love and hate, Mary Woodson had crossed over it. She had fallen out of love with singer Al Green, a man whose voice was as smooth as musk-scented body lotion. But before she said goodbye to the ebony minstrel, the charismatic troubadour whose "Call Me" and "Take Me to the River" are still being covered today, she had to make him bear the full brunt of her disdain. Did she hire a gang of thugs to work him over? Did she run to the press with fabricated tales of abuse? Did she drag him into court with a fake palimony suit? No, asshole. On the morning of October 18, 1974, as the smiling pop star was getting out of the tub, Woodson barged into the bathroom with a pan of boiling grits and threw it on Green's wet, chocolatey skin. She then fled into an adjacent bedroom and shot herself with Green's .38-caliber automatic. Perhaps ruffled by his breakfast with the devil, Al later abandoned the secular realm and became Reverend Al Green, your gospel-singin' pal.



Give praise to Messrs. Edison and Tesla, for by harnessing the electron they have allowed us to toast bread, blow-dry our hair, save our thoughts on computer disks, and execute criminals. When it came to capital punishment,

a Polish engineer with the unitary appellation of Wrzesinaski favored the electric chair to the gallows or the firing squad. He developed his own model and tried peddling it to government officials in Warsaw, but they decided to stick with their Old World methods of judicial murder. Having wasted months designing the chair, Wrzesinaski chose to embarrass those who dared reject his creation. He would prove that it worked by taking it for a test drive. He stepped into the chair on January 16, 1927, strapped himself down, fastened the headpiece, and flipped on the switch. The machine performed beautifully.



Connecting metal plates to a dining-room chair via a light socket, amateur electrician Otto Weihle of Chicago fried his naked ass on what he termed his "hot seat" in June of 1928.



Welsh electrical-engineering teacher Bill Lambert jolted himself to death in June, 1983, by running electric wires to a metal chair.



After attaching metal electrodes to his chest and back, George West of Rutherford, New Jersey, tugged on a string leading to a light socket one night in October, 1922. He was killed instantly.



On November 1, 1938, seventy-two-year-old Joseph Brown Rice of Santa Monica, California, prepared himself a bath, sat down in it, and lowered a live wire into the water.



Despondent over failing health, Edward Carnell of London fastened electrodes to his body and turned on the juice in December, 1982.



Also troubled by the physical deterioration of his twilight years, neurologist Ritchie Russell of Oxford, England, ran a live cable to his arm in January, 1981.



In 1921, Louis Huc of Rieux-Minervois in southern France committed what is perhaps the first electrical suicide on record. He tied a rock to one end of a copper wire, wrapped the other end around his wrist, and tossed the stone over a five-thousand-volt high-tension wire. The cable, which normally provided the power for a railroad, zapped him like a fly.



Suicide often seems to be a chronic loser's final bid at dignity, an attempt to wipe one's slate clean by getting rid of the slate. A person would hope that a life which had cut them no slack would at least allow them to bow out with a modicum of class.

Life would allow no such luxury for John B. Young. He had once stockpiled large, stinking sums of lucre as a Manhattan builder, but financial flush-outs of the 1870s had greatly humbled him. In 1876, he tried slitting his throat in Chicago but could only muster a flesh wound. In April of the following year, he visited his nephew's third-floor New York office, complaining loudly about financial setbacks. Embarrassed by Young's in-office histrionics, the nephew tried to quietly escort his uncle outside. They had almost reached the street when Young ran back upstairs. His nephew chased him into his office, only to find that Young had jumped from the window.

Now, if Young had merely splatted onto the street, at least he would have died in his chosen manner. But as a fiendish fate would have it, he landed on a steel sign-rod which jutted up from the sidewalk. The rod snapped under Young's weight, and his guts became impaled on it like a record on a turntable's spindle, passing out through his back. Flapping about like a speared fish, Young slithered five feet down to the rod's base. A cop came by and tried to lift him, only to have him sink all the way down again. Young was by this time snow-blind with pain. Two men came by with a stool and, with the added leverage it provided, were able to wrench Young up and off the iron bar. Niagaras of blood were spurting from the giant hole in his abdomen. He was taken by ambulance to Chambers Street Hospital, where an examining physician observed that the rod had fractured Young's pelvis, ruptured his bladder, and ripped through five different areas of his intestines. When death finally came to take him, it was on *its* terms—slow, torturous, and without honor.



"The wise man," wrote Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, "will for reasonable cause make his own exit from life on his country's behalf, or for the sake of his friends, or if he suffer intolerable pain, mutilation, or incurable disease." For ninety-eight years he found no "reasonable cause" for killing himself. Then, as he was returning home from lecturing one day in 332 B.C., it happened. As the result of this tragic incident, he beat the ground with his fist and wailed, "Earth, dost thou demand me? I am ready," whereupon he hurried home and hanged himself. He had considered life worth living until that bodeful day when he stumbled and broke a toe. ■





THE THRILL

I'm shooting at my mother, and it feels *good*. Ripping that stupid smile right off her face, I am. Phony bitch. I'll teach *you* to give *me* shit. No more lies. Can't hide now—I've got you in my sights. Mommy, your little boy's a man now, and he's gonna bury you. Tonight's different. You can't fuck with my head tonight. Tonight I got a gun.

BO! BO! BO-BO-BO-BO! Nineteen bullets to a clip, mommy, and with each chunk of smoking lead, a piece of my childhood leaves me. Your head's full of holes, oh my sweet, serpentine mumsy. I blew that fake smile away, wiped it clean away. Those 9mm caps tore your throat open down to the bone. Your glasses are smashed, but you won't need them. You can't smell the sweet lead particles, either. You can't smell *shit* anymore.

I collect the loose brass and walk outside into the dewy moonlight. Everything's fresh. I exhale like I just shot my goo. Relief. Tranquility. I crank the ignition and pull away with a dopey grin spreading wider and wider.

THE ENEMY

The not-so-secret agenda of the state and its apologists is clear: Disarm peaceful citizens to render them powerless. Turn law-abiding Americans into criminals with the stroke of a legislative pen.... If people refuse to surrender or destroy their weapons, they will be dealt with by heavily armed police; they will be imprisoned, fined, perhaps even shot if they try to defend their constitutional—nay, their human—rights.

—The Company of Freemen

Above and beyond the smell of greenish hot dogs and weeks-old chili whiffles the meaty, waxy smell of men. Mountain men, desert men, motorcycle men. Grizzled, sunbaked, lizard-skinned men. Bushy sideburns, greasy cowlicks. Pursed, wormy lips. Unbuttoned flannel shirts. Hunting vests. Wheelbarrow guts slung over rawhide belts and denim jeans. The sworn enemies of wimp culture. Men with gonads the size of Olympic shot puts. Men with dicks hard enough to chop wood. Men whose farts could start forest fires. Barrel-chested, tobacco-spitting, bitch-humping **MEN**.

The men mill around in a cavernous airplane hangar painted **WHITE**. A stray wife or two tags along, followed by buck-toothed, straw-haired children. Together the families learn how to make guns; how to dismantle them after they've made them; how to clean and oil them; how to make bullets; and how to recycle the shells and casings after they've fired them.

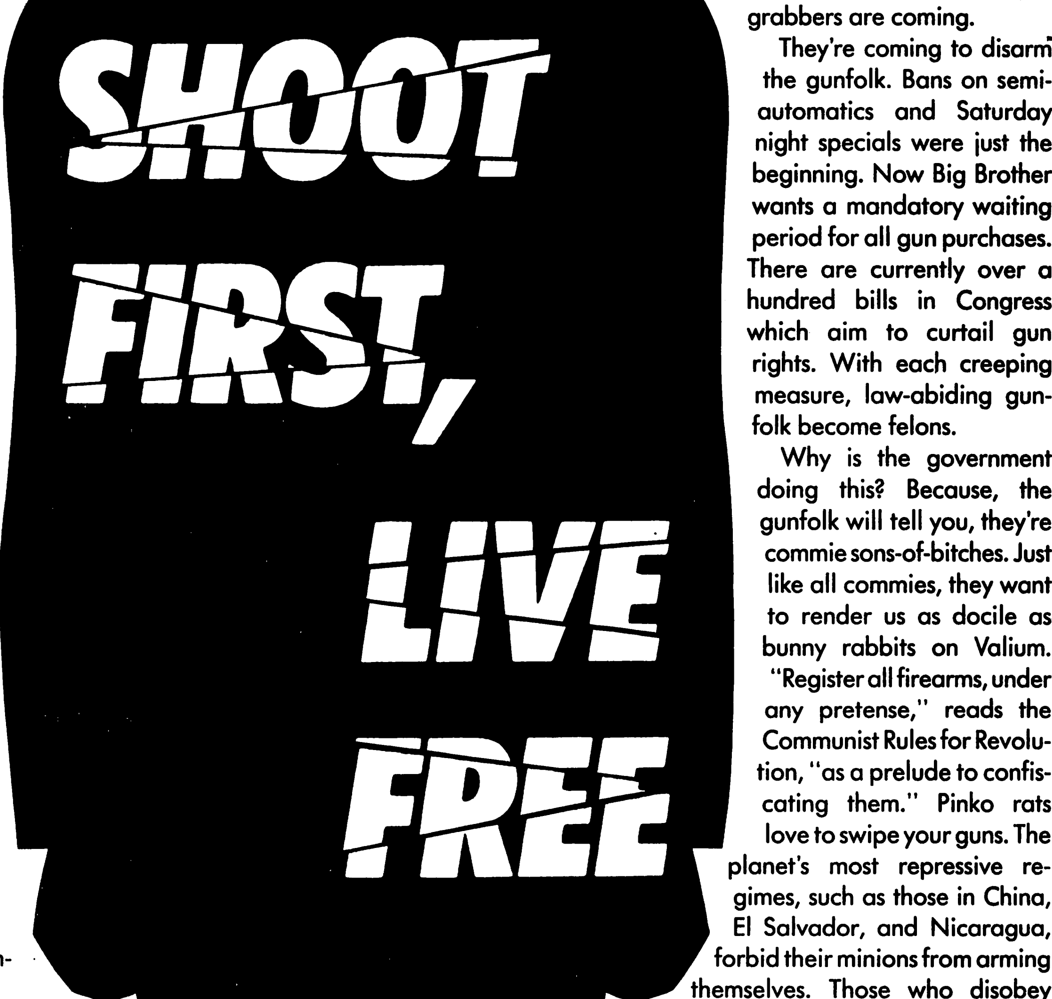
A tall blond man from Utah is selling frozen meat. A gabby Oklahoman demonstrates antique pistols. His left thumb is missing its top joint. It was blown off during a shooting accident. Another vendor stands magisterially behind a Tommy Gun, which is ensconced shrinelike in a padded guitar case. A man and his son silently scrutinize it. "Alright," says the father to the vendor after several moments of wordless reverence, "let me touch it."

We're at a gun show, and these, *mon ami*, are the **GUNFOLK**. Who are they? People who enjoy such things as the soul-tickling sight of a father and son cleaning their rifles together; the tender image of a mother and daughter cooking up homemade ammo like so many Christmas cookies; and the soft-hued scene of a wheelchair-bound boy taking potshots at waterfowl. They are patriots. Freedom-lovers. Constitutionalists. Pioneers. Honest and upright, valorous and gallant. **TRUE** Americans.

But the gunfolk are worried. They're being painted into a corner. One by one, like clothes from a stripper, their rights are being removed. The gun grabbers are coming.

They're coming to disarm the gunfolk. Bans on semi-automatics and Saturday night specials were just the beginning. Now Big Brother wants a mandatory waiting period for all gun purchases. There are currently over a hundred bills in Congress which aim to curtail gun rights. With each creeping measure, law-abiding gunfolk become felons.

Why is the government doing this? Because, the gunfolk will tell you, they're commie sons-of-bitches. Just like all commies, they want to render us as docile as bunny rabbits on Valium. "Register all firearms, under any pretense," reads the Communist Rules for Revolution, "as a prelude to confiscating them." Pinko rats love to swipe your guns. The planet's most repressive regimes, such as those in China, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, forbid their minions from arming themselves. Those who disobey





have to stare down a firing squad. "If the opposition disarms," wrote Joseph Stalin, "well and good. If it refuses to disarm, we shall disarm it ourselves." As the year 2000 approaches, the neo-Bolsheviks are gunning for our guns. Along with high taxes and a corrupt banking system, it's all part of **THE CONSPIRACY**.

"We're marchin' off to the gulags," sighs a bearded elfin gun peddler. "See, what they did—nobody really wanted to stand up for the gun laws. Very apathetic, people are. They'd sell us out for twenty pieces of silver. That's a shame." His voice is high-pitched, like a power saw chewing through a stubborn log. Though he travels with the show, he lives in Kentucky—let's call him Colonel Sanders. He sits behind a weather-beaten table upon which are spread rusting gun parts and an 84mm rocket launcher which can blow through eighteen inches of titanium steel.

"I hate being out here in these liberal states," he grouses. "I don't know what's gonna happen to this country. People are just standing in line, getting ready to go to the gulags. The government today wants to come into your bedroom really bad. They're never gonna give up until they get in there, unfortunately."

Gunfolk despise the government far more than any coffeehouse lefty does. Gunfolk inhabit the far, far right, the intergalactic right. They realize that the government assumed power with **GUNS**. They know that the government maintains power with a billion **GUNS** pointed at our heads. When the government comes to disarm us, they'll use **GUNS** to do it. Gunfolk understand that when guns are outlawed, it won't only be outlaws who have guns—the *lawmakers* will still have them, too.

Proponents of gun control, known to the gunfolk as the **ANTIS**, never question the government's right to own guns. They say common citizens shouldn't be privy to massive firepower because somebody could get hurt, but they don't acknowledge that the world's governments have always been the Fortune 500 of mass murder. The antis see government as boundlessly benevolent, much as a suckling child cozies up to its mother's sagging teats.

Poppycock, say the gunfolk. Hogwash. Flapdoodle. Politicians are the biggest gang in town, the bookies in a monstrous extortion racket. Big Brother gorges himself on our tax dollars like a mosquito on blood. But the gunfolk ain't havin' it.

They call themselves "freemen," unbeholden to parasitical slave-drivers. They hold an iron conviction that there are fates worse than death, among them living with your tail between your legs. They know that without tax resisters and superior firepower, there wouldn't *be* an America.

"Anyplace you can't own a machine gun, you're livin' in Nazi country," says Colonel Sanders. I *like* this hick little motherfucker. He seems straight-up. I'd trust him with my back turned, which is more than I can say for most people. "Yeah, I'm afraid that humanity's never gonna change," he says, his hairy fist resting on his knee. "That ain't gonna change. What you gotta do is you gotta put distance between yourself and that herd of people.... I'm tellin' you somethin'—you gotta get out of here. They're closin' in on ya. You gotta go to Kentucky.... Right now, you can get anything you want there. Yeah, you can get full-auto. Gasoline's a dollar a gallon. Cigarettes are six bucks a carton. You can buy a two-hundred-thousand-dollar house for fifty thousand.... It's just a different lifestyle. You can see the horizon."

A listener nods his assent. He calls the Golden State "the People's Republic of California."

Colonel Sanders agrees. "This here is unbelievable," he says, shaking his head. "You stand here from this position, you don't see one gun. It's baloney. You might as well go to a flea market—there's T-shirts over there. You can go to a gun show in the South, and that's all it is—**GUNS**. Unbelievable. I gotta be free. Can't live like this."

The **THREAT** is everywhere, even at gun shows. It takes men of steel to resist the stomping onslaught of limp-wristed, gun-burning, subhuman offal. So with teeth gritted and abdomens knurled, the gunfolk are ready to **FIGHT**....

THE SCUM

Somewhere there are squads of dope-crazed savages combing through mounds of rubble, selecting razor-edged cudgels to crush your skull the next time you're desperate or foolish enough to venture into their darkness. Down the street—in that shiny new federal office complex—there are covens of sniveling bureaucrats poring over volumes of forgotten laws, looking for some metalegal reason for vaporizing your weapons in a government blast furnace.

—U.S.A.: The Urban Survival Arsenal

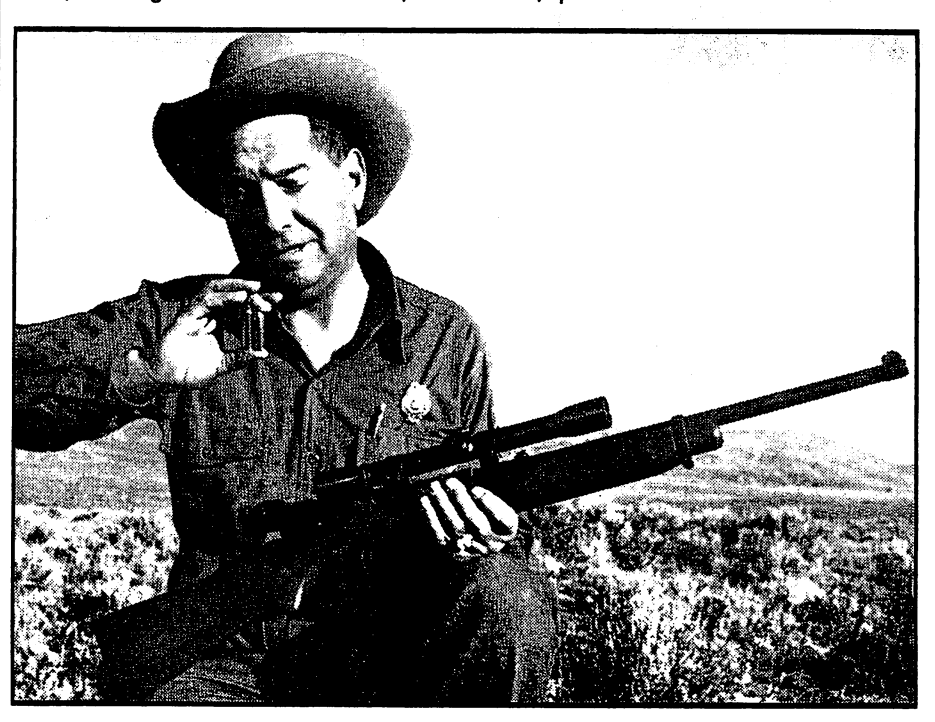
...But it's going to be a *tough* fight, considering the titanic, suffusive brainwashing machine known as the **LIBERAL MEDIA**. A bunch of tree-hugging, dope-shooting, meat-shunning, whale-protecting, anus-invading, ivory-tower fruit flies those reporters are, I'll tell ya. They pump their poisonous vomit out through radio speakers, TV screens, and newspapers, favoring slimy penises over clean rifles, crack-puffing rapists over gunfolk.

It's the news media, say the gunfolk, who've engendered sympathy for the looters, dopers, gangsters, scumbags, perverts, hoodlums, arsonists, marauders, pillagers, madmen, killers, animals, muggers, burglars, wackos, malefactors, villains, hooligans, thugs, ruffians, goons, hellcats, cannibals, vandals, barbarians, fiends, vampires, roustabouts, and desperadoes who now roam our streets with impunity. *Look! Somebody got shot in a stickup! Here come the paramedics! Hurry! Help that guy! No, not the victim, stupid—the gunman! His pistol recoiled so hard, he has a boo-boo on his hand!*

According to the gunfolk, the media lackeys aid the government to ensure that The Conspiracy succeeds without a hitch. And, dag nabbit, is it ever succeeding! Irresponsibility is now considered a virtue. Decadence is looked upon as cute. Welfare is seen as a birthright. The muckiest excrescences of primordial slime are touted as high culture. The maggots have arrived.

And they're dining on whitey's corpse. Now, not all gunfolk are white racists, but not all pro basketball players are tall black guys, either. Indeed, gunfolk are an overwhelmingly Caucasian lot: If a 1987 poll is to be trusted, melanin-deficient households are fifty-four percent more likely to contain a gun than those of the so-called "mud people." Gunfolk see European civilization as the primary target of The Conspiracy's "racial-socialists." Western thought, Western customs, even Western skin color are thought to be jeopardized in a global scheme to purée humanity into a grey bowl of raceless oatmeal.

Pro-gun bigotry's apex is found in Andrew MacDonald's *The Turner Diaries,* a withering, paranoid, horribly written novel which the FBI has called "the bible of the racist right." It dares to ask firearms owners' favorite question: "What will you do when they come to take your guns?" The book opens with governmental gun raids which trigger a guerrilla war against "Zionist" overlords, resulting in a holocaust of nonwhites and a new era spearheaded by rifle-totin' palefaces. First-person protagonist Earl Turner starts out having his apartment searched and ends up dropping a bomb on the Pentagon. The plot is laughably contrived in the manner of a schoolboy playing with plastic soldiers: Turner escapes death with the ridiculous improbability of an action-movie hero until he's blown to Aryan smithereens in his kamikaze mission. What begins as a loose-knit paramilitary posse grows into an earth-governing, snow-white, quasi-Druidic inner sanctum known



as The Order. Hitler is referred to as "the Great One," and genocide of nonwhites is called "sterilization." The entire planet eventually becomes white, although certain sectors of Asia remain too radioactive for habitation. Characters are rendered flatter than paper targets. Nevertheless, *The Turner Diaries* would seem to invigorate any reader who pines for a White Jerusalem.

Here at the gun show, there's no dearth of pro-white white folk. The only black person in sight, a muscle-laden male in a US Marines shirt, trudges about uncomfortably, and it's hard to blame him: Uncle Adolf is everywhere. There's an affinity for Hitler bordering on kink, with more German militaria being sold than American stuff. A pair of wrestler-sized bikers conspicuously clomp around, one garbed in a DAVID DUKE FOR PRESIDENT T-shirt, the other wearing a turquoise ring with a swastika inset. Glowering at merchandise, a skinhead wears a shirt with the slogan HAIL VICTORY! above a Nazi flag. Sporting a disciplined little moustache, one vendor deals strictly Teutonic wares, including the infamous JUDE patch which Jews were forced to don under the Third Reich.

And then there's Dieter, a Prussian-product-pusher *par excellence*. Besides the standard swastika flags and armbands, he sells swastika patio lamps, *Triumph of the Will* and *Afrika Corps* videos, and SS jackets in "full Gestapo leather" for twenty-five hundred smackers. Dieter came to the US from Germany as a teenager in 1958. He has an amiable glint in his eye and a belly undoubtedly cultivated from one too many Oktoberfests. I ask him if he catches any static for selling Nazi souvenirs, and it takes him about three seconds to start making racial slurs:

"No. I just tell them to get away. They're mostly Jews. I thought people were so open-minded. Only when it comes to *their* stuff, like communism."

His blonde wife demonstrates a black-velvet choker with a rhinestone swastika sewn into the front. Three hundred and fifty bucks. "Dat was for the super-rrrrich," she boasts, "and dey had the clothes to go vit it!"

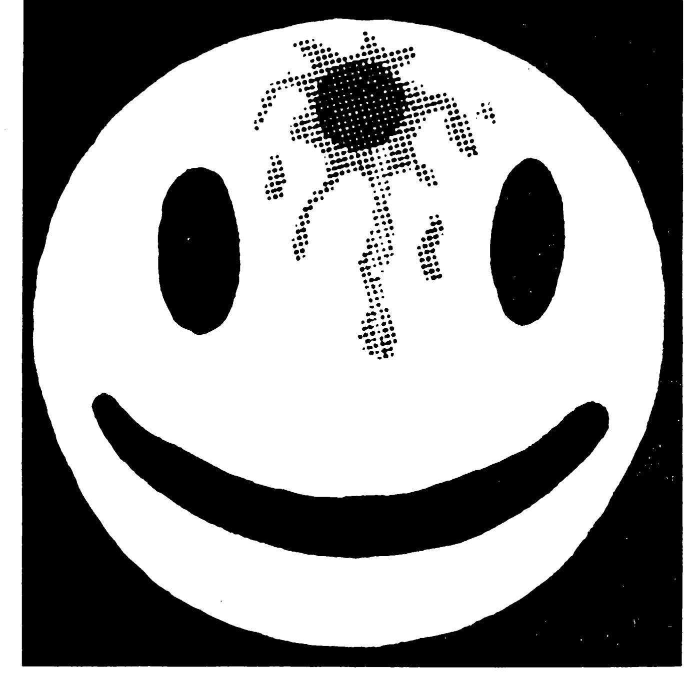
Dieter claims he'd be jailed back in Germany for hawking Hitleria. He says he has no urge to return to the *Vaterland*. "They're having a lot of problems. About forty percent unemployment. No wonder the young people get mad—they don't have a chance to get a job. They're bringing in all the *Schwarzes* and all the Gypsies and all the Asiatics—same as over here, you know? It's something that's internationally desired by certain people, you know, to mix everybody up.... [The immigrants into Germany] get paid fifteen hundred a month, and they don't have to work for two

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years. All the young German kids are mad—they don't have a chance, because the welfare system is so over-bloated. It's turning into America over there. They come in from Africa with eighteen kids."

Trebly German marching songs tootle from a peewee boombox. "This country is going down the tubes," Dieter dictates, "especially in California. There's no borders here. They're letting in the Mexicans, the Central Americans—a white couple like you won't have a chance.... Between the blacks and the Mexicans, they're going to burn everything from San Francisco down to San Diego. If you can't see the handwriting on the wall, you must be on drugs."

Certain that it will rile him enough to spit out another venom-filled quote, I ask Dieter if he's ever visited the Big Apple. "You want to break my nerves," comes his retort, "put me in New York City for ten minutes. I mean, *Jew* York City. You can look at somebody there, and they'll have four races in them—black, white, Jewish, Oriental—you don't know *what* they are. *Hell* is better than New York City. And they want us to mix. They want the Germans, the Scandinavians, to mix with those people. In another generation, the whole country will be like New York City. There will be bloody, bloody riots and counter-riots. You won't even need an earthquake to set it off. It could be a change in the weather, whatever.... The best things you can get right now are beans and bullets."



THE END

Anyone who doesn't know that America is in 'big trouble' has a marshmallow for a brain.... You have grown fat and soft and will not face reality....The riots and conflagrations will be massive, and will spread throughout the US—and when that happens, there will be a breakdown of all order—with worldwide disruption of trade, transportation, economics, industrial production, and food distribution. Hunger, riots, and revolution will follow, as prophecy has clearly foretold.

—From the American Pistol and Rifle Association newsletter

It's a minute before midnight. The boat is swiftly sinking. A crisis is coming. The big one's going to go down. The shit's going to drop like an H-bomb any day now. The balloon's ready to go up. The world as the gunfolk see it is a very, very, very, very, very, very, very dangerous place.

Although a full-scale nuke-athon isn't as likely as it was ten years ago, there are ever-present threats demanding ulcerous vigilance. Crack-addled street hoods, trigger-happy Muslim extremists, Southeast Asian narco-Stalinists, and lunatic dictators all crouch on the other side of town, waiting to strike. Laser weapons and neutron bombs are as easy to procure as a bag of Chee-tos. You never know when an angry foreigner's going to fire a ballistic missile into your living room. Since the Cold War ended, ethnic skirmishes have flared up like acne on a teenaged chin. Society is a fat pimple ready to pop.

If external threats don't hobble us, the economic time bomb is sure to implode. The public debt is a big blue whale, and we're all a helpless mouthful of plankton. Less than three cents' worth of gold back each dollar. The Third World will never make good on their loan obligations. The day is nigh when we won't even be able to keep pace with our *interest* payments.

KABLOOM! Bankrupt planet. Global depression. A new Dark Age. Dystopian nightfall. Perpetual conflict. Famine. Decimating outbreaks of disease. A reversion to skull-smashing troglodytes and blood-guzzling tribal warlords. And what will you need when Armageddon beckons? **GUNS**, you moron!

Should the nightmare scenario arise where the gunfolk's guns are lost, stolen, or inoperable, they must learn how to build *new* firearms from common items. Renegade publishers such as Loompanics, Delta, and Paladin sell books which teach the gunfolk how to construct crude zipguns from household odds and ends, shotguns from plumbing pipe, and "a homemade machine gun which can be built for less than twenty dollars!" Other instructional manuals render bootleg ammo as easy to make as outhouse moonshine.

More exotic primers demonstrate how to conceal your gun inside a microphone, a doorknob, bicycle pumps, belt buckles, helmets, or a shoe heel. You can even rig your car's steering column to shoot at would-be thieves. For a few pieces of silver, the eager reader can tutor himself in sabotage and night surveillance, shadowing and tailing, wiretaps and cryptography, lock-picking, interrogation, steel-cutting, window-jimmying, mail-tampering, natural and synthetic poisons, computer-hacking, radar-jamming, and anything else which might fall under the penumbra of manufactured mayhem. Sitting in front of a fireplace with his feet propped on a fluffy footrest, the armchair terrorist can learn how to derail trains and knock out an entire city's power supply.

But what if the unthinkable happens? I speak, no doubt, of the gunfolk's ultimate horror: What if the enemy has a bigger gun than you? One word: **BOMBS**. As might be expected, this world suffers no shortage of handy, do-it-yourself munitions literature. Using titles such as *Silent Death, Deadly Brew,* and *The Big Bang,* earnest gunfolk (and malicious pyromaniacs) can hoard weapons of mass destruction snugly within their trailer homes or studio apartments. C-4, a nasty explosive favored by terrorist groups worldwide, turns out to be as simple to throw together as a tossed salad. Nerve gas, missile grenades, fuel-air explosives—even atomic bombs—can be whipped up while you watch *America's Funniest Home Videos.* And you don't need uranium to produce high-powered charges: Fertilizer,

mothballs, sawdust, candle wax, and coffee can all turn an attacker into cartilage confetti. If you prefer not to face the enemy head-on, it's easy to booby-trap his alarm clock, telephone, shower head, talking teddy bear, or toilet-paper dispenser. As he reaches to wipe his ass, you can wipe him off the planet.

THE ANTIS

Our ultimate goal—total control of handguns in the United States—is going to take time.

—Handgun Control, Inc.

Ugh! Yuck! Gross! What sort of person besides a poorly weaned psychotic would sit at home devising ways to gore other humans? The antis are nauseated by all the carnage-glorification, the clinical descriptions of shredded cadavers. They stratify gunfolk somewhere beneath Java man, the brackish ebb and flow of a polluted gene pool. They say the gunfolk's polemical paranoia proves what sick bastards they are. In an enlightened world, say the antis, guns would be as useless as torture racks and studded truncheons.

The antis decry a powerful gun lobby, a dark monolith financed by a pro-death firearms industry. America, say the antis, is in the throes of a gun crisis. There are almost as many guns in the US as there are people. Firearms kill or wound someone every 2.5 minutes, and many of the victims are eentsy-weentsy children taken out by stray bullets. Handguns alone kill ten little American whippersnappers daily. A federal firearms license is easier to get than a driver's license, giving the US more gun dealers than gas stations.

Guns, the antis assert, turn abusive husbands into killers, curious children into lead-plugged corpses. A study conducted in Cleveland from 1967 to 1973 concluded that a gun kept at home is six times more likely to hurt someone in an accident than to be used against a criminal. The *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that for every trespassing criminal who eats lead, *forty-three* others croak from errant gunplay in the home.

That's a bunch o' poopy, say the gunfolk. Those stats seem lopsided because they include suicides and cases where guns were rightfully used against assaultive family members. If you want to quote stats, tell the people that a car is twelve times more likely to kill someone than a gun. More juveniles lose their lives in bicycle mishaps than in firearms accidents. The odds are greater that you'll choke to death on food than on a stray bullet. What are you gonna do—outlaw Chevys, ten-speeds, and canned ravioli?

The *truth,* which the antis run away from like cockroaches from a light bulb, is that only two percent of accidental deaths involve guns. Among firearms owners, less than one in three thousand will *ever* murder someone. The belief that gun homicides are escalating is likewise a big brown pile of liberal doo-doo: The FBI Uniform Crime Reports state that the 1990 gun-murder rate was down more than five percent from a decade earlier.



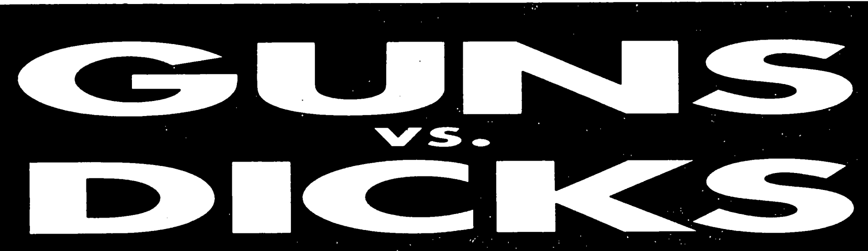
Ask a criminal what he fears more than the police or jail, and he'll say a long, dark shotgun barrel pointed between his eyes by a pajama-clad homeowner. With four million American homes burglarized yearly, it's impossible for cops to protect everyone. In fact, gunfolk acting within the law kill more criminals every year than all police agencies combined. But the antis prefer that we defend ourselves with good politics. Their biggest argument against firearms is that they're designed for only one thing—killing people. *Exactly.* So what's your point? To be frank, most of the antis don't live in areas where they'd ever *need* a gun. Candy-assed hypocrites. Embarrassed amid their European cohorts at wine-sipping parties, they make slobbering apologies for America's high gun-ownership rates. Fuck, that's the best thing *about* America!

Still, the antis insist that the deterrent effect of guns kept at home is illusory and outweighed by the danger. Well, chew on some Swiss cheese, you little rats: Switzerland requires *all* adult males to stock their houses with full-auto rifles. The Swiss murder rate is about fifteen percent of that in the US. They're just blowin' holes through the Matterhorn, aren't they? A better example, and one which hits closer to home, is what happened in Kennesaw, Georgia: In 1982, the city made it *mandatory* for homeowners to have firearms. During the first year after the law was passed, Kennesaw's residential-burglary rate dropped sixty percent. It dipped another fifty-eight points the next year. Kennesaw's murder rate? There *is* no murder rate in Kennesaw. To see what effect anti-gun laws have on the murder rate, you'd have to visit L.A., New York, or D.C., cities which have some of the toughest gun-control statutes on record. Why, they're virtual Gardens of Eden, right?

So maybe the problem lies not with honest, God-fearing, shoe-shining gunfolk, but with your criminals and isolated cuckoo birds. I'm sure that criminals give a fuck whether or not guns are legal. I can just see them lining up to surrender their firearms. Gun control only makes their job easier. While the antis would point to George Jo Hennard's blood bath at Luby's Cafeteria as an airtight case for gun control, gunfolk counter that it's a good argument for private citizens to carry concealed weapons. Hennard was a maniac; most of Luby's customers weren't. If ordinary people were allowed to go about fully strapped, Hennard wouldn't have been able to smoke twenty-three humans. Somebody's grandma would have whipped out a .357, sent Hennard's cranium flying in a thousand directions, and returned to her tapioca pudding.

THE LAW

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear



Everyone knows that firearms are a totemic device modeled after the male sexual organ. Feminists, bless their unshaven little hearts, chafe at guns as just another repressive patriarchal tool, the steely barrel just another loathsome protuberance. But let's push the metaphor further, just so there's no misunderstanding:

Head	Muzzle
Shaft	Barrel
Urethra	Chamber
Testicles	Magazine
Sperm	Bullet
Girth	Bore
Hard	Cocked
Condom	Holster
Strokes	Rounds
Prostate	Striker
Thinking About Baseball	Safety Latch
Cum Shot	Projectile
Impotence	Jamming
Premature Ejaculation	Trigger Happiness
Blown Wad	Loose Brass
Jock Itch	Lead Buildup
Masturbation	Target Practice
Circle Jerk	Shootout
Vasectomy	Blanks
Circumcised	Sawed-Off
Penile-Enhancement Surgery	Full-Auto Conversion
Three Inches	Two-Shot Derringer
Ten Inches	"Street-Sweeper" Shotgun
Long Dong Silver	Shoulder-Mounted Missile Launcher

arms, shall not be infringed.

—Second Amendment to the US Constitution

"Wait a cotton-pickin' minute," bawl the antis with their veiny, gnarled Adam's apples bobbing up and down pistonlike, "the Founding Fathers couldn't have conceived of 9mm automatics and MAC-10s that belch out thirty caps with one tug of the trigger." Well, they didn't know about photocopiers, fax machines, and personal computers when they wrote the First Amendment, but I don't hear you squawking about limiting free speech, ya pricks.

So what *did* our nation's architects mean with their crappy syntax and bad punctuation? The antis claim that the Second Amendment pertains strictly to the militia, i.e., the Army, and was never intended to grant janitors the right to stockpile machine guns. But there's that pesky phrase, "the right of the people." How could a government infringe on its own Army's rights? The antis won't tell you that the first US Senate tried to abridge the Second Amendment to embrace only "the common defense." The measure was shot down like a clay pigeon. The antis rarely cite the Militia Act of 1792, which required every white male between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to own a gun and join the militia. It was codified a measly five months after the Second Amendment was enacted. If you don't believe me, here's what the mack daddies of the thirteen colonies had to say about private gun ownership:

The best we can hope for concerning the people at large is that they be properly armed.

—Alexander Hamilton

Anyone who surrenders his arms because of a cry for public safety does not deserve freedom.... The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.... No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms.... Laws that forbid the carrying of arms... disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes.

—Thomas Jefferson

Americans have the right and advantage of being armed—unlike the citizens of other countries, whose governments are afraid to trust people with arms.... A well-regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, is the best and most natural defense of a free country....

—James Madison

Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself. They are the American people's liberty teeth and keystone under independence. To ensure peace, security, and happiness, the rifle and pistol are equally indispensable. The very atmosphere of firearms everywhere restrains evil interference—they deserve a place of honor with all that's good.

—George Washington

The great object is that every man be armed. Everyone who is able may have a gun.

—Patrick Henry

Is that evidence enough? OK, now shut your mouth and *keep* it shut until I ask for your opinion.

THE HUNT

Did you ever see what a .44 Magnum pistol will do to a woman's face? I mean, it'll fuckin' destroy it. Just blow it





MORE FUN... with YOUR GUNS

right apart. That's what it can do to her face. Now, did you ever see what it can do to a woman's pussy? __That__ *you should see.* **—*Taxi Driver***

Maybe I learned to respect guns the night when, as a lonely, dope-seeking Philadelphia teenager, I scored a handful of joints downtown. Several blocks from where I copped, as I dizzily drifted through a grimy sector near the Greyhound station, some dude accosted me with the words, "I know you got the weed." I offered to smoke some with him, so we headed down an alley to fire it up. When I cupped my hands to light a joint, he stuck a chrome-plated revolver in my guts and demanded my money, all seven bucks of it. I looked down at the gun as it twinkled in the early summer twilight. He took my cash and bolted, and I walked ten miles home.

As a wise man once said, "Never again." Cross me—just once—and you become a target. I don't care if it's a riot, an earthquake, or just some jerkoff with an attitude—nobody's going to clown me again.

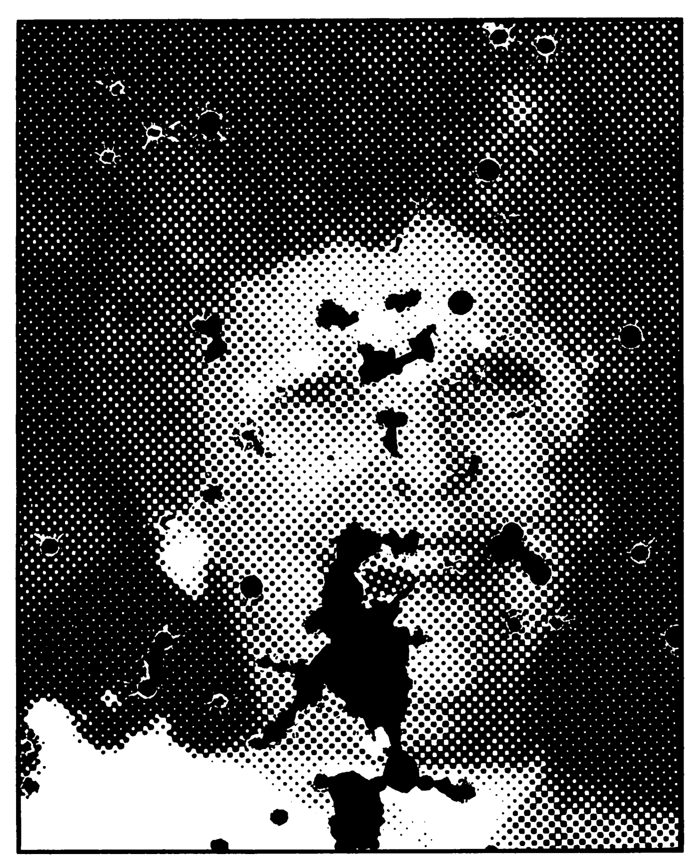
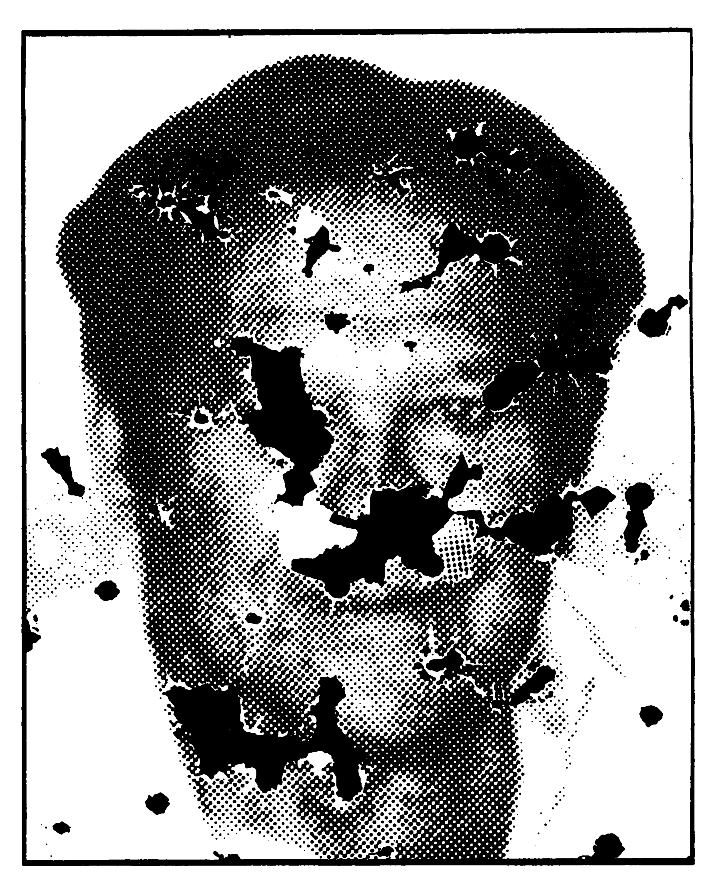
Storm clouds fill up the sky. The nightly sound of shotgun blasts is as familiar as my alarm clock's numb buzz. Meat wagons roll through the streets. Police-chopper lights peer into my window. Fat, red-eyed schizophrenics are barking outside, saying they're going to kill me. I'm in too fucking deep. I want that cold steel in my hands. I've made up my mind. I'm gonna buy a gun.

I can't afford to make a mistake, so I study their anatomy like a medical student. I mull over their calibers, barrel lengths, scopes, clips, stocks, sights, triggers, springs, safety levers, ejectors, and grips. I balance power against accuracy, close-combat utility versus sniping potential. I learn about the glamor guns, those whose names read like digital poetry: the TEC-9, 30.06, .357 Magnum, and M-16. I acquaint myself with bullets: flatnosed bullets, fragmenting bullets, and armor-piercing "cop-killer" bullets. A bullet must quickly flatten the enemy. It must induce hydrostatic shock and maximize tissue damage. A bullet should expand properly in order to create a giant wound channel. Optimum blood loss is the goal.

Yessiree, bullets can be mighty fetching. But because of its size, the shotgun shell is able to contain more bewitching ammo than standard rifle or pistol casings. Shotgun shells can hold rounds such as the coquettish "Turbo-Grabber," whose hollowpoint slug is rimmed with tiny teeth, transforming the discharge into a flying buzz saw. "Flechette" cartridges are loaded with twenty steel darts. The "Flamethrower," according to one catalog's enthusiastic description, "expels a load of exotic, fast-burning, high-temperature metals three-hundred-plus feet downrange, totally engulfing your target in a momentary four-thousand-degree fireball!" My sentiments lean toward the "Strung Buck," a shell which houses two huge lead balls joined by six-inch wire strands. Upon impact, the Strung Buck tears right through a victim, flaying his chest into beef jerky.

But enough research. *"A GREAT WAY TO RELIEVE STRESS!"* trumpets the Yellow Pages ad for a downtown pistol range, and I'm a big ball of twine all knotted in tension. Debbie's nervy, too, so we hop in our jalopy and head for Skid Row. As we walk into the range, we're faced with about nine hundred Koreans and a like number of firearms. I rent the Glock 19, possibly the sexiest handgun ever made, with a design as winning as a '65 Mustang. It's lightweight and partially cast in space-age plastic, rendering it a dull, rubbery black. My paper target depicts a rodent-cheeked, suit-wearing assailant who resembles a *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* villain. Clad in protective earmuffs and goggles, I squeeze out the first cap. I'm startled at how fucking **LOUD** it is, like a mallet socking me in the ribs. No electric guitar ever spoke the heavy-metal thunder that this little gun does. One shot quickly follows the next until there are none. As I collect my used brass, pay the bill, and walk outside, it dawns on me that I'm **HAPPY**, maybe happier than I've been in years. I feel cleansed, like I've been crying for hours. I've taken an elevator ride up to the lair of the gods. I have become Shiva, destroyer of worlds.

Clutching the power over life and death in your hand is more addictive than any skin-popped opiate. I'm jonesing to shoot again, and *soon.* We devise a perfect double date with another couple—dinner, then gunplay. I swallow my meal as quickly as possible and corral everyone into the car so we can zoom to the range. My hand is sore after having been crushed under a hydraulic paper trimmer, so I choose the .22 Luger, which looks like a German spy gun and has minimal recoil. I expend a hundred rounds in the blink of an eye. As the four of us leave, the sound of parking-lot gravel crunching under our feet, we all feel washed in the River Jordan. Driving away on a foam-rubber cloud, I fantasize about how it would feel to pump lead into more "human" targets—say, honeydew melons or balloons filled with Jell-O. I wonder what it would be like to get my claws on a shotgun, to bang up my shoulder until it's black-and-blue. Shit, how about an antiaircraft gun? A cannon? Sniffing my fingers, I realize that the smell of gunpowder would make a fantastic

We perform cosmetic surgery on our parents.

cologne. My cock's gonna be *brick*-hard tonight.

My only grievance was with the target—too impersonal, like a crash-test dummy. So I use a stat camera to blow up some photos of our surviving parents—Debbie's hemorrhoidal father and my bloodsucking mom—to poster size. Now we're *really* horny to go shooting.

As I clip Debbie's lumpy, knish-shaped dad to the target holder and send him sailing downrange, a hundred feathers tickle my loins. I feel hopeful. Since Debbie had been somewhat gun-shy up to this point, I start her on a piddling old Smith & Wesson .22, which jams more often than it fires. When she has no trouble with the .22, I hand her the more powerful Glock 17, which holds nineteen 9mm bullets. I begin shouting some of her dad's more irksome lines into her ear: "You're ugly!...I wish you had died instead of your mother! ...You'll never get married, because nobody wants you!" Lurching forward, her legs spread and teeth gnashing, Debbie empties the clip. She's not a gun virgin anymore.

"Who's *that* person?" asks a man peeping out from the stall to our left, pointing to the now-battered target of Debbie's pop. Our interrogator looks like a Yale grad—neatly cropped blond hair, granny glasses, grey sweat shirt.

"That's my father," Debbie proudly replies.

I lift up the target of my smiling *mere.* "And this is my mother," I say, beaming.

"Do *they* know about this?" Mr. Prep School asks uneasily.

"I don't know," I answer. "We haven't spoken to them for years." His skinny lips crinkle into a gawky smile as he burrows back into his stall's sanctuary.

KER-PLOW! The blood pressure seeps out of us with each pull of the trigger, each deadly volley hurled at our progenitors. How *dare* they steal our formative years away from us? Well, we've got them cornered, and they can't get away now. They invested a lot of hatred in us, and now it's payback time.

"It was such a physical release," Debbie confides to me as we head out. "It was *wonderful.*" It seems like it took us four hours to get to the gun range and about six minutes to return home. We taped the sounds of gunfire. We'll listen to the tape on insomniac nights, certain it will lull us to sleep.

We rent a semiautomatic AK-47 on our next shooting jaunt, and the Soviet-designed rifle has a rib-rattling pow-pow report with a healthy bluish flame streaming from the muzzle. Wearing a black-velvet overcoat, Debbie grips the AK like a gun moll, blowing holes in her father's face. A warm feeling rolls over my scrotum.

We'll hit the same range one more time, accompanied by three other people, all of us trying each other's guns in the true communal spirit, all of us bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. But somehow the rent-a-gun racket leaves me feeling empty. I realize that the string of one-night stands with unfamiliar firearms can't go on forever. I don't want to be known as an aging gun slut. I must choose *one* gun and make a commitment to it.

THE GUN

This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine. My rifle is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life. My rifle, without me, it is useless. Without my rifle, I am useless. I must fire my rifle true. I must shoot straighter than my enemy, who is trying to kill me. I must shoot him before he shoots me. I will.... My rifle and myself know that what counts in war is not the rounds we fire, the noise of our burst, nor the smoke we make. We know that it is the hits that count. We will hit.... My rifle is human, even as I, because it is my life. Thus, I will learn it as a brother. I will learn its weaknesses, its strengths, its parts, its accessories, its sights, and its barrel. I will ever guard it

against the ravages of weather and damage. I will keep my rifle clean and ready, even as I am clean and ready. We will become part of each other. We will.... Before God I swear this creed. My rifle and myself are the defenders of my country. We are the masters of our enemy. We are the saviors of my life. So be it, until there is no enemy, but Peace!

—The Creed of the United States Marines

Do you believe in love at first sight? It only happened once before, the night I first dove into Debbie's big brown eyes. And here comes that sticky feeling again, surging through my limbs, making my knees weak. It just looks so seductive, mounted there on the wall behind the counter, silently imploring me to take it home. Resplendent black steel, shiny black plastic. Hey, good-lookin'....

It's the devastating Mossberg 500 twelve-gauge shotgun, and I'm in love. It's so baleful, diabolical, and pitiless, I think I'd follow it around the world if it asked me. This sweetheart's equipped with a custom sight, front and rear pistol grips, and side clips which hold six shells in addition to the seven which fit in the mag. The Mossberg's tooled for destruction. Its infernal belch will knock down anything in its path. Police agencies call it the "riot pump" and use it to disperse crowds. It's possibly the most brutal close-combat weapon you can buy legally.

So of course we buy it, registering it in Debbie's name due to my assault records. Forced by California law to wait fifteen days before we can take it home, I shoot some tender Polaroids of our new baby and bid it adieu. Lovesick, we try to pick a name for it as we stare at the pictures. We consider The Peacemaker, The Pacifier, Mommy Dearest, The Therapist, and Mr. Nice Guy, rejecting them all. We decide to call it The Reverend.

And so it came to pass, after fifteen days and fifteen nights of rain, that The Reverend spewed forth hellfire, an unholy issuance which splitteth the sky. Its heathen lightning cutteth straight through the raindrops, drilleth a tunnel through the fog, hammereth some indeterminate downrange mud. There are four of us weathering the antediluvian downpour, and our unprotected ears endure The Reverend's full bloody roar.

The rain taps like a machine gun on the skimpy canopy slung over our heads. This is the only legal shotgun range in Los Angeles, perched on soggily bucolic foothills in the county's northern fringes. It has gunfolkish touches such as a sign which reads, DANGER: RATTLESNAKE AREA and a gun instructor whose name—I shit you not—is Kent Turnipseed. The range is a mucky beige pond after two straight weeks of rain, but a biblical-looking man in a 4x4 truck—presumably Mr. Turnipseed—allows us to shoot when we tell him it's a new gun. I guess he remembers being young.

With little success, we hurl clumps of lead at the steel pigs and ducks which taunt us fifty yards away. We're soon joined by three good-ol'-boy types, men whose appearance conjures dioramas of coal stoves and corncob pipes. They coo over The Reverend as if it's Rosemary's Baby. Within a minute, they're laying down raps about the evil metropolis New York and "niggers"—how not all black people are niggers, how some white people *are*. Their apparent leader is a short, beflanneled gent. With a lit, unfiltered cigarette jutting defiantly from his yap like an erection, he has the unaffected psycho aura of a lifetime military man. He tosses an empty plastic ammo tray into the water and starts dinging it with a .40-caliber Glock pistol. His aim is dead-on, and the red tray bobs up and down with each hit. He says he's taught target-shooting for thirty-seven years and has won seventeen national championships. Meanwhile, *my* shots zoom up and away like a jet plane, touching nothing. With gunfolkly compassion, he offers me a quick lesson. He holds The Reverend like he invented it and shows how I should plant my elbow in my waist while aiming with my index finger. After a few rounds, I'm sinking the ammo tray with ease. He tells me I'm shooting better than people he's been teaching for five years.

I smile. "They don't have my anger, boss."

THE KILL

The will to kill, the complete lack of sympathy and compassion, and no hesitation in killing the subject, is paramount. You must take his life as detachedly as you might swat a fly or crush an ant.... [One] method [of] silencing the report... is to jam the muzzle up his rectal





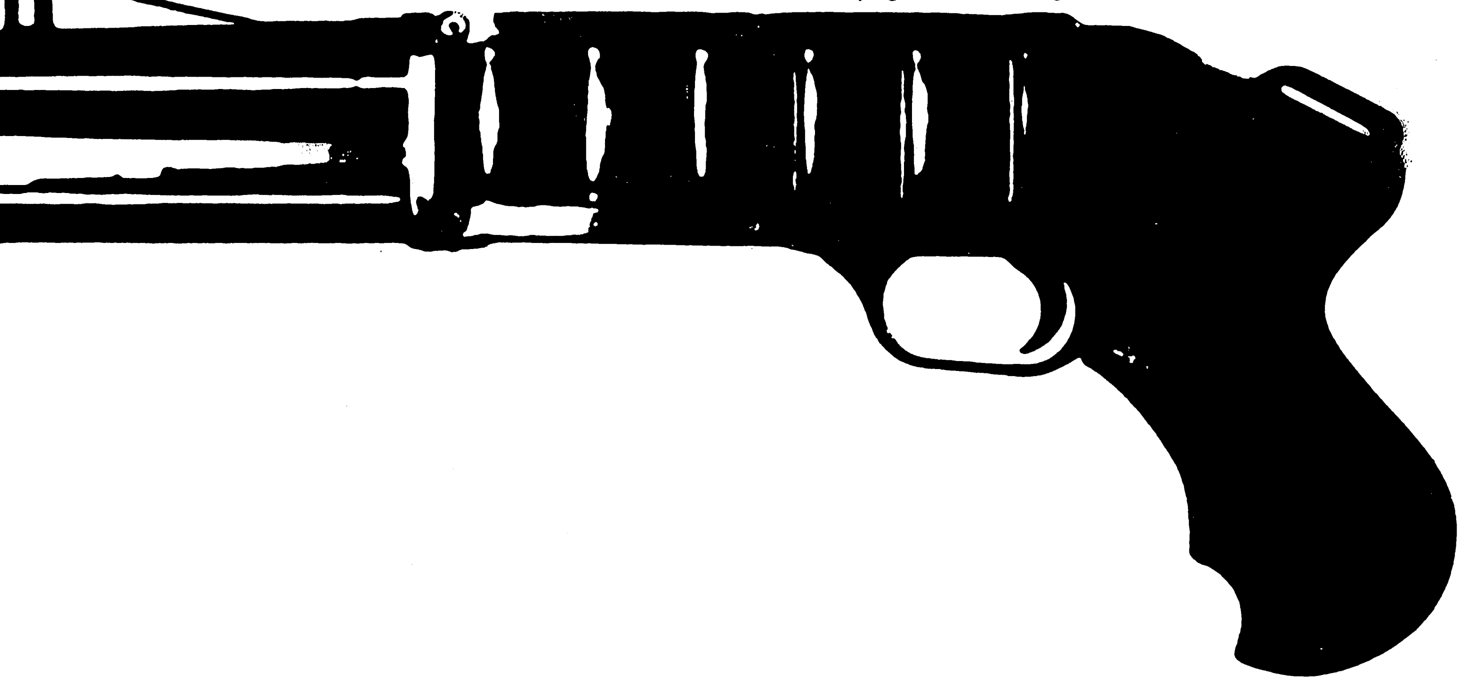
orifice and fire the weapon. Apart from being virtually silent, the cause of death is not immediately apparent....

—Kill Without Joy!: The Complete How to Kill Book

Joey grew up in my neighborhood. Joey owned a shotgun. While demonstrating it to a friend, Joey shot himself in the face. He survived, forced to live out a degrading Elephant Man existence. He rarely ventured outside. He wore sunglasses when he did, and people whispered to each other wherever Joey went.

Piss me off, and Joey will look like Fabio compared to you. I'll peel your face open like a banana. I'll pepper your torso with fistfuls of cruel little pellets. You can run if you want, but I'm looking into your crystal ball, and **GUNS, GUNS, GUNS** are in your future.

Tortured puppies become nasty dogs. You cocksuckers thought it was all a joke, right? Heh, heh—**POW!** When some scumbag comes creeping into my apartment looking to lift my shit for some crack money, I'll blast his ass out into the hallway. Fuck, if someone *honks* too loud outside, I'll turn his brains into tofu. Some asshole knocks on our door trying to sell the *L.A. Times,* **BLAM!** Front-page news. Lousy service at a restaurant? **BOOM!** Human marinara. I'll mow 'em down like ragweed, spray 'em like roaches, dust 'em like a bookcase. I can't wait to see the life seep out of someone's body like air from a tire. I laugh at my enemies' bulging eyes as I slip the shotgun barrel into their mouths. I relish the crimson parade of my foes being carted away in body bags. I cuddle used shotgun shells like they're newborn kittens. I'll shower with my gun. I'll go to the video store fully armed. I'll cruise supermarket aisles with The Reverend in one hand, a box of Cheerios in the other. I scatter lead like stars into the glittering L.A. night. Slowly... insanely... I become one of the gunfolk. ■



ANDREI CHIKATILO



52 CONFIRMED KILLS

IMPOTENT SUPERMAN

Open a deck of playing cards. Cut them, fan them, shuffle them, do all the annoying tricks that impress your dullard friends. After you've finished amusing yourself, hold the entire deck in one hand. Using your other hand, lift the first card. Rub it between your thumb and forefinger for a few seconds. Ponder it. Allow its uniqueness to sink in, then drop it on the table. Do this with each card until you've depleted all the aces, all the face and number cards, every last diamond and club. Mull over the big pile spread out motionless on the table. Fifty-two cards. That's how many *people* Andrei Chikatilo snuffed.

So hats (plus tongues and genitals) off to the daffy Russki, who now stands as the most prolific serial killer of modern times. Operating mainly in the grimly macho, smoke-puking port town of Rostov, he laid waste to twenty-one boys, fourteen girls, and seventeen women. Starting in October, 1978, he raped, killed, and gnawed on raw sexual organs until his abduction late in 1990.



Physically, Chikatilo was an unimpressive cum stain of a man, as forgettable as a used scrap of newspaper being pushed along by a dry wind. It was his very blandness which enabled him to persuade Rostov's young wastrels to accompany him into the city's thick forested strips. Cruising train stations, bus stops, and video parlors, he lured fatally gullible souls with the promise that some pot of gold—vodka, porn tapes, or a ride in his car—was waiting on the other side of the woods. Culturally conditioned to trust all adults, the simpering Soviets swallowed the bait.

A fanatical communist, Chikatilo said he was upholding puritanical commie mores by slaying street skanks. He imagined himself heroic, defending the motherland's honor in a one-man guerrilla war. "Everyone was spying on me," he told a reporter, "so I could fight only using guerrilla techniques. Grab a prisoner, take them to the chief of the guerrilla team, and find everything out. I told them that we're going to the guerrillas. And I tied up their hands.... I had fulfilled my guerrilla mission against my offenders who poisoned my life. I knew that I had stood up for myself."

UP is the operative word, because Chikatilo was cursed with a drooping pirogi. He felt he resembled a woman and had been taunted in his youth by fellow Red Army soldiers, who jeered at his feeble asexuality. He took a lover after leaving the military but proved unable to boff her borscht. The woman blabbed to townsfolk about Andrei's dud Scud, sneering that "his machine is not working." After that shameful night of non-penetrative sexual agony, Chikatilo tried unsuccessfully to hang himself. He never forgot his debasement at the hands of that unsatisfied Ukrainian maiden. "I was very angry with that girl," he would recall. "I dreamed of catching her and tearing her to pieces as a revenge for my disaster."

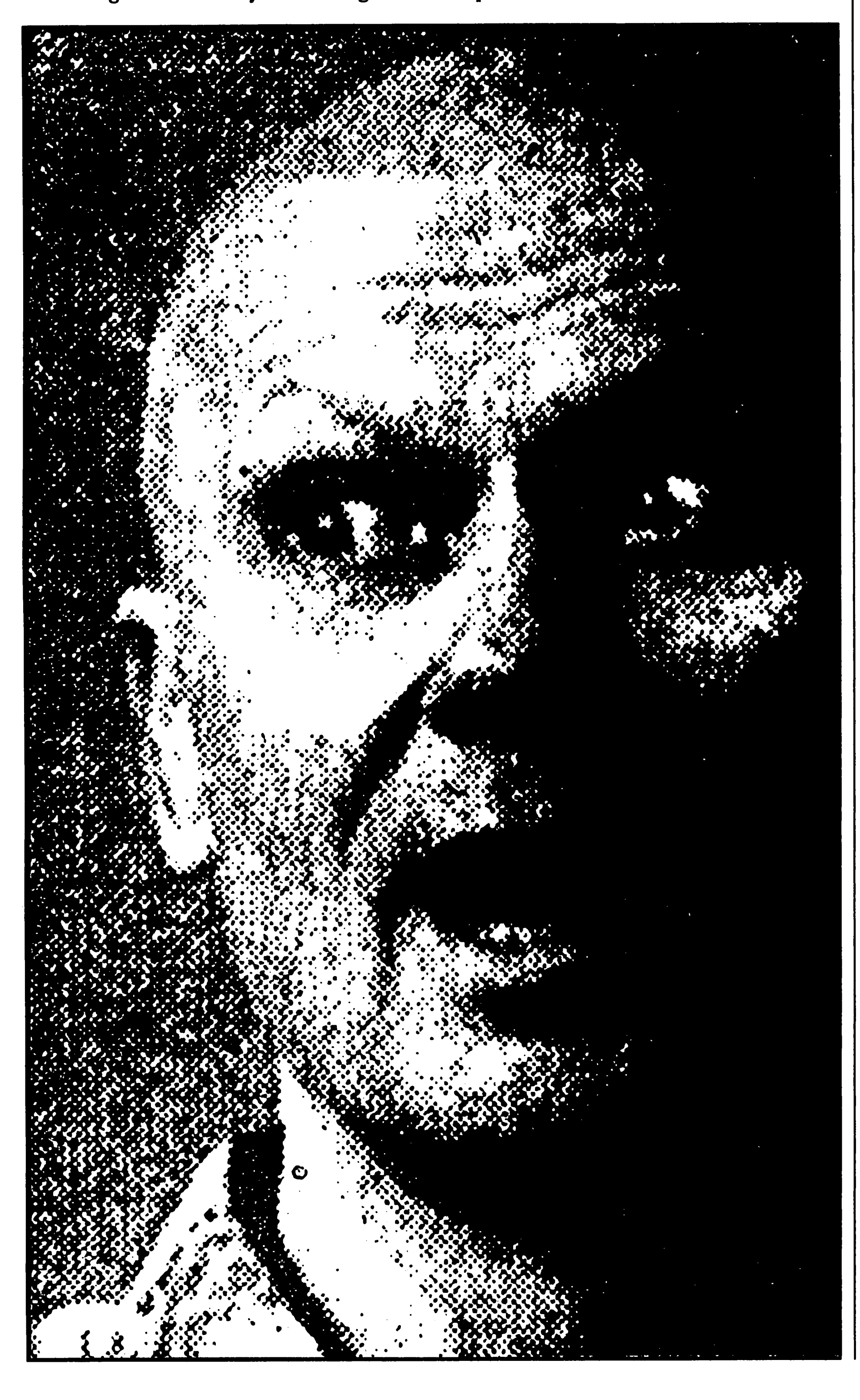
But the foot-long knife he carried with him into the woods never let him down. Chikatilo described his in-forest demeanor as that of a "crazed wolf." Raindrop-sized beads of sweat gathered on his balding pate as he and his quarry plunged deep within the dark woodlands. He assumed command there, his hidden rage made manifest in a most ungainly manner. He'd assail his victims out of nowhere, usually from behind—doggy-style, so to speak—and pin them to the ground with his two-hundred-pound bulk. After binding them and running through his guerrilla spiel, he'd torment them by tearing loose their sex organs, biting out their tongues, and slitting open their guts *while they were alive.* Moving in for the kill, he'd stab them in the heart first, then in the eyes, because he felt the victim's retinas preserved the murderous apparition even in death. While jabbing with the blade as many as fifty times, he was capable of raising his mast long enough to jerk off. After spurting his filthy grey dribble, he'd often grab handfuls of rich forest soil and ram it into dead mouths and assholes.

His first victim, a nine-year-old girl, was the object of a foiled rape attempt which unraveled into homicide. When Chikatilo found that squeezing out the little missy's life really got him *hot*, he sexually fused with murderous sadism, a phenomenon psychiatrists term "imprinting." He was questioned in connection with that killing, but inept Russian officials arrested, convicted, and executed another man. As the eighties dawned and the bodies stacked up, Rostov police fell under the delusion that a gang of psychotic young males was responsible. But the slayings proceeded unhindered even after all the gang members were jailed. The killing pace reached its zenith in 1984, with seventeen Rostovite lives extinguished by the impotent psychopath. Police arrested Chikatilo the same year but released him after they bungled a basic blood test. From then until 1989, the killer confined most of his action outside the Rostov area, usually during long business trips for his job as a factory supply clerk. One victim in Uzbekistan was so severely mutilated, she was originally

thought to have been shredded by a harvesting machine.

Fifty-five officers were eventually assigned to the case full-time, listing twenty-five thousand suspects. Chikatilo was nabbed in November, 1990, when a cop spotted him covered with scratches and stooping to clean his boots after exiting a wooded area. He was set free but taken into custody a few days later when a carcass was found near the arrest site.

The sexually dysfunctional child-butcher didn't budge after nine days of interrogation. Police then produced a psychiatrist who had drawn up a hypothetical personality profile during the manhunt, describing the unknown killer as an aging milquetoast who was good with kids but had trouble running his flag up the pole. When the shrink read the portrait aloud, Chikatilo recognized himself and began weeping. He admitted guilt for the thirty-four murders with which he was charged and described twenty-one others, of which only three were dismissed for lack of evidence. Chikatilo led police to murder scene after murder scene, unearthing bodies the cops weren't even aware had been missing.



During his protracted confession, he detailed harrowing childhood memories of cannibalism, dismemberment, and familial shame. When he was four, his mother told him that prior to his birth, famine-crazed villagers captured his older brother and gobbled him clean to the bone. Mama Chikatilo warned young Andrei never to stray outside their yard. The story petrified the fledgling psycho, but it also tantalized him. Living under Nazi occupation in the early forties, the beardless youth helped his fellow citizens pick up body parts which had been blasted all over the streets. His father, who had been taken prisoner by the Germans, was reviled after the war as a traitor and sent to the gulags. The stain remained in Chikatilo's mind, which may account for his compensatory attempts at valiance through knightly war-game fantasies.

In addition to his ghoulish boyhood and soft pecker, he also blamed the petty indignities of endless business travel. "I dreamed of a big political career," he sighed, "and ended up with this nothing life, in stations and on trains.... I know I have to be destroyed. I understand. I was a mistake of nature."

Like many seasoned slayers, he was skilled at concealing his violent shadow existence. Chikatilo had lived for years in an apartment with his wife Fayina and their two offspring. He says he and the missus ceased humping circa 1984. "I love my wife," he wrote. "I'm grateful to her because she endured my impotence. We had no real intercourse, only imitation." Imitation? That leaves the imagination open to several hilarious possibilities, doesn't it? From all reports, Chikatilo's bambinos had no clue that their flaccid pappy was killing as many mortals as there are weeks in the year. Fayina, whose screaming tirades sent her limp mate scuttling into a corner, described him as a "perfect husband," a man incapable of "killing a chicken." She didn't even suspect anything after learning he had lost two teaching jobs because of child molestation. When Andrei came home disheveled and blood-sprinkled, she believed his stories that his cruel bosses were making him load dirty wooden crates. But rather than face the mazurkas of publicity which swirled around them after Chikatilo's apprehension, Fayina and her brood adopted pseudonyms and moved away.

They missed one hell of a show. For the trial, Russian officials placed Chikatilo in a white metal cage to protect him from vengeful court observers. Frenzied babushkas lunged toward the cage to claw at him, squealing, "Give him to us! Let us have him!... They should rip him apart like a dog!... If they gave him to me, I'd

tear him apart! I'd gouge out his eyes and cut him up! I'd do everything to him that he did to my daughter!" Under Russian law, the victims' relatives were forced to stand and endure the judge's recitation of the grisly deeds inflicted upon their dearly deceased. White-coated nurses were on hand with smelling salts to revive those who fainted.

Inside the cage, Chikatilo chased after reporters' popping flashbulbs as if they were butterflies. He screamed that he needed an ambulance and complained that the court ledger had misspelled his name. He once completely disrobed and began spinning his shirt over his head, howling, "Under this banner I battled the Assyrian mafia!" At one particularly entertaining juncture, he claimed that he was pregnant and that his breasts were swelling with milk. As the trial wore on and his demise seemed certain, he began each day's session baying like a loon and was usually ejected within the first five minutes. Despite such laudable theatrics, Soviet shrinks declared him sane. When his death sentence was pronounced, Chikatilo threw his bench against the cage in disgust while the crowd went joyfully berserk. As guards led him away in manacles, he was heard hollering, "Crooks! I fought for free Russia and free Ukraine! Crooks! Crooks!..."

At the trial's beginning, with his wide eyes and shaven head, Chikatilo looked like an emaciated Amazing Colossal Man. As his sparse hair began to take root and he slipped on a pair of horn-rimmed glasses, he resembled a typical elderly perv. Whatever his head's condition—shorn or fuzzy—a single bullet will have slammed through the fifty-eight-year-old dome by the time you read this.

Back when Chikatilo was out slaying dozens, Russian police refused to publicize the case. The Communist Party line had been that serial killing was strictly a capitalist phenom, a symptom of the virus known as Western materialism. Chikatilo's final arrest coincided portentously with the Soviet Union's disintegration. State socialism had its faults, but at least it imposed iron-fisted ethics upon its subjects. These days, moral guidelines are cloudy or nonexistent in Russia's emergent shoot-'em-up free market. Russian lawlessness is on the upswing, spreading with the virulence of Coca-Cola and Big Macs. As Chikatilo's trial began, there were reports of a new serial killer in southern Russia, a phantom responsible for eight deaths in January, 1992, alone. Just as they trounce us every four years in the Olympics, the newly emancipated Russians may soon snatch the gold medal in human atrocity. ■





Pederastic Park?

BY ADAM PARFREY

A vicious sort of urban legend began to flourish about the time of Richard Gere's alleged dalliance with rectal rodents. Its subject was Steven Spielberg, and the gossip had to do with the director's overweening fascination with child actors. Mindful that hearsay is sometimes false, we are withholding the delicious details. But the fact that this rumor exists at all confirms an underlying unease over the presumably innocent entertainments created by Hollywood's oldest *Wunderkind*.

Spielberg's latest theme park-style extravaganza, *Jurassic Park,* isn't as explicitly swishy as his failed *Hook,* but it reveals components of the auteur's personality that have parents wondering about the movie's appropriateness for children.

King Kong, The Lost World, and *Godzilla,* three monster epics cannibalized by *Jurassic Park,* achieved their thrills without resorting to on-screen menacing of tots. Indeed, only on milk cartons can we find children so psychically raped as the celluloid juveniles of *Jurassic Park*. The film's sadistic tone is established early on, when a fat child challenges the paleontological theories of protagonist Sam Neill. Neill turns on the boy, and in low, menacing tones, he demonstrates to the child how a prehistoric nasty would mangle and devour him. Adding a distinctly Peter Kürtenish *frisson,* Neill slashes near the child's belly and crotch with a large, sharp claw.

Perhaps among all our "childlike" wonderment with the subject of dinosaurs, we forget that child abusers commonly invoke the threat of large beasts to frighten and silence their victims. Is the director conjuring the trappings of childhood obsessions only to wield them for a darker purpose?

Although overtly sadistic, *Jurassic Park* was reined in by its obeisance to special effects; it revealed few of the excesses of *Hook,* in which Spielberg's psychodramatic inclinations were allowed to roam free. *Hook* is the culmination of over a decade of false starts in bringing J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* to the screen. At first, Spielberg was reportedly considering a live-action redo of the Disney animated feature, starring Michael Jackson as the perpetual pre-pube. But the auteur of suburban childhood wasn't satisfied with a simple remake.

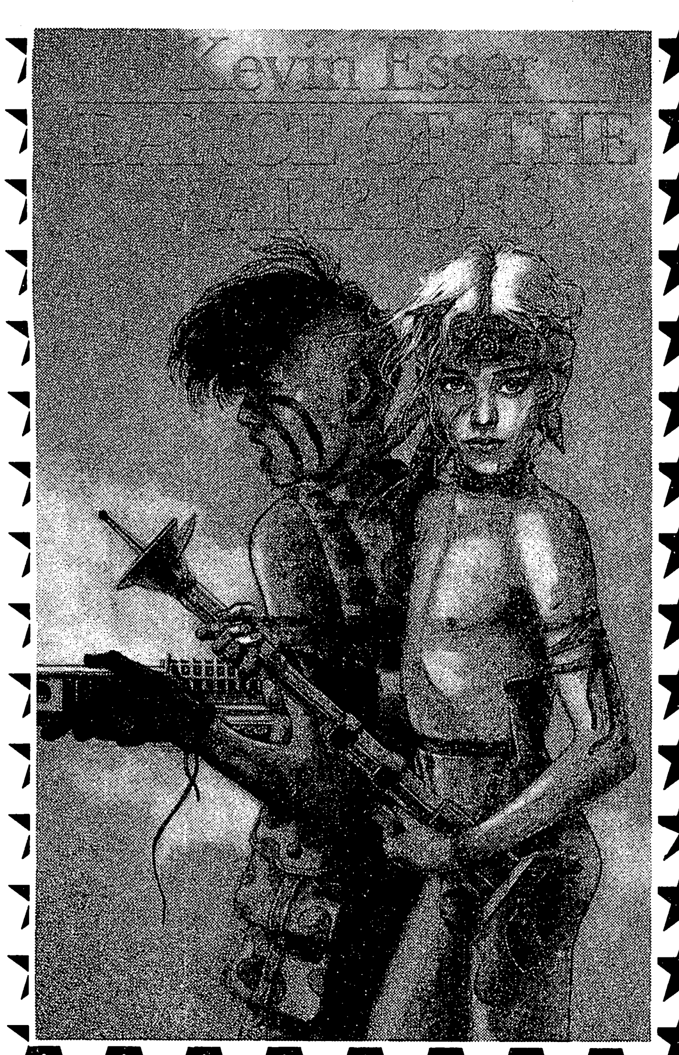
The high-concept Hollywood sound bite, "What if Peter Pan grew up?" not only indulged Spielberg's predilections, it provided the film's investors with a tinklingly trendy phrase redolent with the "recovery" metaphysics that have become the ethos for Hollywood's ***haut monde***, the same ***haut monde*** who have lately forsworn the continual cocaine-and-Quaalude concatenations so relentlessly documented by former Spielberg producer Julia Phillips in her autobitchography, *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again.*

The recovery movement is led in part by ex-drunk John Bradshaw, who smilingly encourages his readers to throw off the ruinous shackles of adulthood in order to "liberate the inner child." It comes as little surprise that Steven Spielberg takes part in Bradshaw's therapies, which include workshops where "lullaby music is played and participants cradle or stroke one another." Asking Steven Spielberg to liberate his inner child would be akin to asking a serial murderer to actualize his anger. By his own admission, Stevie has experienced little in the way of adulthood outside of his overprotective upbringing and the adulatory, toadying fantasy land of Hollywood. Bradshaw's "inner child" therapy is a mere baby-step away from the Diaper Pail Fraternity, a Sausalito-based group for grown men who revert to incontinent infancy, where surrogate mommies exclaim and coo as they wipe the kinky kid-fetishists' dirty behinds.

Spielberg's *Hook* is redolent not only of the inner-child component of recovery, but also its darker aspect: child molestation. Bradshaw seeks to place blame for psychological malaise on a dimly remembered past in which some form of traumatic abuse took place. The less the so-called abuse is remembered, the more convinced are Bradshawian therapists that it actually occurred. At the time that *Hook* went into production, all the radio and television talk shows fixated upon child abuse in a catharsis of mass scapegoating. Suddenly, millions of Americans were convinced that they had been molested by their nuclear family or ritually abused by Satanists.

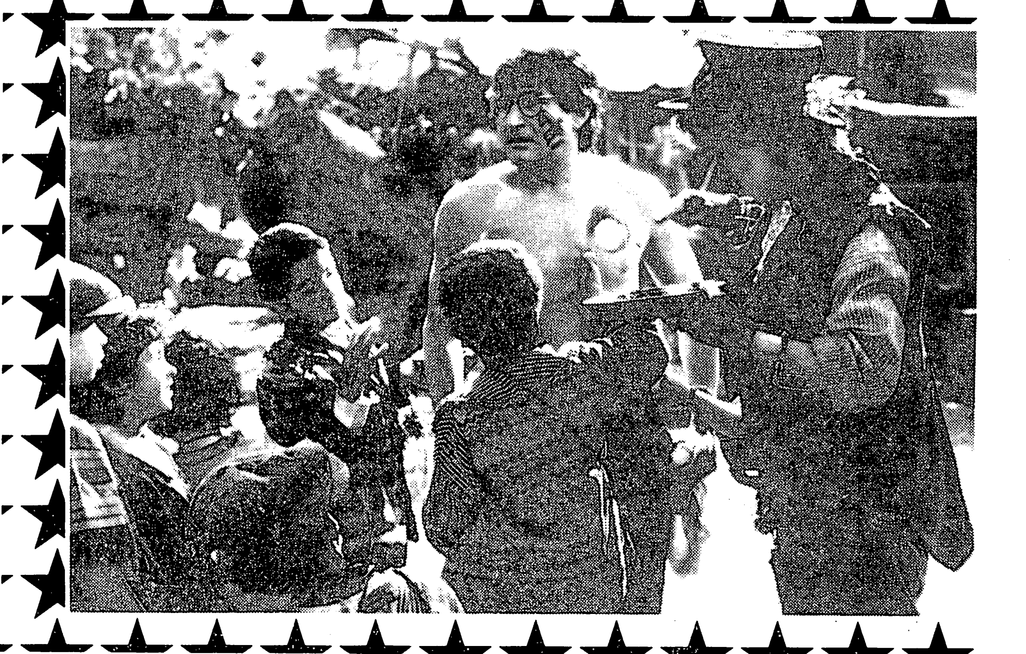
On the crest of the child-abuse wave, Spielberg's Peter Pan project was transformed into *Hook*, whose ad campaign abandoned the traditional flying fairies in lieu of a stark visual of the prosthetic steel claw gleaming against a black background. The gruesome hieroglyphic was a perfect mnemonic device—see hook, think *Hook*—but more importantly, it transferred any possible pedophilic overtones from Spielberg himself


NAMBLIN'
EXPLOITAINMENT
JURASSHOLE PARK.
BOX OFFICE MUSCLE
SCRIPT
$
$
$
$
$
SOAP
COOP





Queer coincidences: pre-pubescent freedom-fighters in the pedophilic fantasy novel Dance of the Warriors *oddly resemble the Lost Boys of* Hook *(upper left and right); gay body-painting ad is strangely similar to the Lost Boys' affectionate daubing of Robin Williams (lower left and right).*



(the auteur hero) to the classically pederastic fantasy figure of Captain James Hook, the fiend who spirits children away to a Neverland where Cabbage Patch foundlings enliven the sodomitical lives of Village People pirates. Here, Spielberg could be evading responsibility for his alleged tendencies by projecting them onto his villain, a strategy employed by Hitchcock and other directors renowned for their sadistic inclinations.

Peter Pan had, of course, become such a dusty chestnut that almost no one would object to its pedophilic content. Who would remember that its author, Sir James Barrie, was a full-blown boy fancier who never consummated his marriage to actress Mary Ansell and carried on a passionate "friendship" with the sons of Sylvia and Arthur Llewelyn Davies? Even today, no one can comfortably explain why Barrie had insisted on naming his eternal child "Pan," after the goatish satyr of mythology. In a tradition begun by Sir Barrie, most stage productions of *Peter Pan* cast a boyish woman in the lead role, a transvestite tradition Spielberg may well have paid homage to by casting Glenn Close as the bearded pirate named "Gutless."

Pederastic organizations such as NAMBLA insist that children are wise, sexual creatures who should be given the opportunity to be fondled, sucked, and anally penetrated by middle-aged men. The *NAMBLA Bulletin* has a special column called "Boys in the Media," tracking the doings of such Hollywood chickens as Macaulay Culkin, known affectionately in the *Bulletin* as "Mac." The self-described "Ganymedian" L. Martin, who writes the "Boys in the Media" column, spoke by phone about Steven Spielberg and *Hook*.

"Spielberg is known for his interest in young boys, certainly," said Martin. "A lot of the members have been talking about *Hook*, telling me how much they enjoyed it." NAMBLA spokesman Renato Corazza refused to confirm or deny Spielberg's possible membership in the Man/Boy Love Association: "We don't divulge our membership rolls." And is it merely accidental that another pederastic magazine goes by the acronym *P.A.N. (Paedo Alert News)*?

Spielberg's costume designer Anthony Powell endows *Hook*'s "Lost Boys" with a cute Benetton-meets-Oliver Twist look tailor-made for the chicken-hawk sensibility. *Dance of the Warriors*, a futuristic fantasy about a warrior cult of young boys who fight right-wing Christians for the privilege of having sex with aging boy-lovers, sports on its cover a salt-and-pepper boy couple who almost precisely mirror two of Spielberg's Lost Boys. The book appeared in the pedophilia sections of gay bookstores just at the time that *Hook* was going into pre-production.

Just who are Spielberg's Lost Boys? Walter Keane-style big-eyed orphans? *Lord of the Flies* in Suburbialand? *Hook*'s smarmy press kit tries to make each personality distinct. There's *Rufio* ("the proud leader of the Lost Boys, whose determined jousting with Peter for the honor of guiding the troupe of ruffians leads to a new understanding between the two rivals in Neverland"); *Ace* ("the Lost Boy with all the angles figured out for his peers"); *Thudbutt* ("whose imposing size belies his gentle disposition among the Lost Boys—but don't get him angry!"); *No Nap* ("a street urchin complete with suspenders, knickers, a newsboy cap... and a heart of roughened gold"); *Latchboy* ("the curly-top redhead who always finds himself in the thick of any mischief contrived by the band of tarnished angels"); *Pockets* ("one of the smallest Lost Boys, who has a particular soft spot for helping Peter get his wings in Neverland"); and *Too Small* ("the tiniest Lost Boy in stature but one of the feistiest in nature, who wears his pajamas through thick and thin").

Hook's emotional highlight, strangely absent from the shooting script's first revised draft, is the touchy-feely communion of the adult Peter Pan and the Lost Boys. We're treated to prolonged takes of the tykes touching and caressing Robin Williams's face and body. When the Lost Boys smear war paint on Williams's naked torso, the idyll is reminiscent of a certain gay body-painting video advertised in *The Advocate* "that focuses on creative eroticism, that expands and extends the beauty of foreplay."

There's not room enough to detail the pedophilic implications of other Spielberg productions: the man/boy relationship in *Empire of the Sun*, which begins with John Malkovich's comment about young Christian Bale's "sweet mouth" and reaches its emotional climax when Malkovich directs the chicken to move his cot next to his; the child-alien/human ectodermal interactions in *Close Encounters*; and the sanitized incest theme of *Back to the Future*. However, it was *E.T.*, Spielberg's most exalted triumph, which seems to clothe the boy-love fantasy in New Age vestments. Spielberg uses every trick in the director's chapbook to induce us to love a wrinkled, potbellied cosmic interloper that hides in boys' closets and communicates with a glowing, phallic finger. It was young Henry Thomas's taunt to his twelve-year-old celluloid brother—"penis breath"—that had Spielberg conjure, if only for a disturbing instant, the image of a bald-faced lad with a cock in his mouth.

Although the "negligent" participants got off with nary a knuckle-rap, we must not forget that Spielberg also produced the actual snuff film *The Twilight Zone*, in which Vic Morrow and two young children were beheaded during filming.

Perhaps the most perverse aspect of Steven Spielberg's work is its obsessive posture of sentimental innocence. Psychologists trained in the vocabulary of sex criminals often note the cloak of goo-goos and sugar frosting as the subconscious moral gymnastics of repression and guilt transference. But now that *Jurassic Park* has more openly revealed the overtly sadistic aspect of Steven Spielberg's curious desires, there is only one more place to go for this self-styled avatar of contemporary myth. His upcoming movie, *Schindler's List*, was filmed in Auschwitz. ■



NACHO-FLAVORED

FREAKS

WOULD YOU BELIEVE...MEXICAN DEFORMITY COMICS?

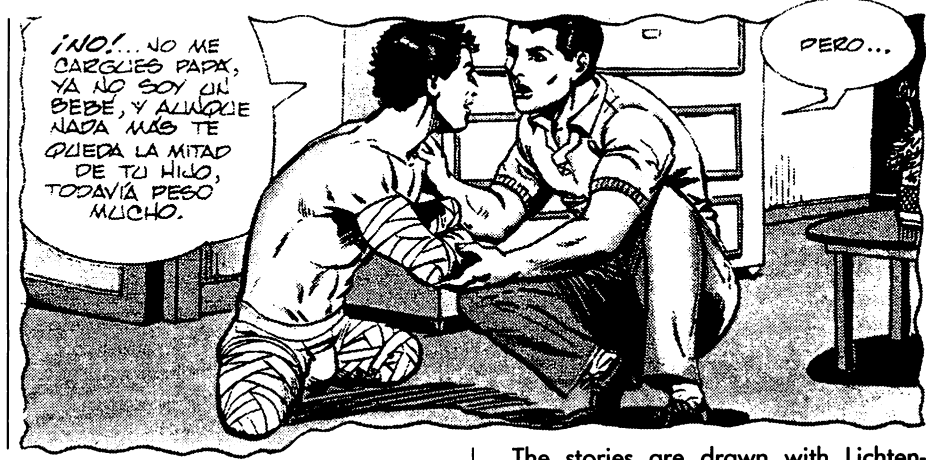
Whether you admit it or not, we all like to stare at freaks... and stare at them... and keep staring.

Staring at a freak, the observer is preconsciously grateful that nature didn't render him a distended, platypuslike, deoxyribonucleic accident. After gawking at elephant people, one's knobby knees or mild acne don't seem all that bad. Freaks sit at the edge of the cosmic dough slab, lumpy globs which missed the graceful sculpting of God's cookie-cutter.

Nature's nice, I guess, but it truly springs to life only when it fucks up royally. When sex and violence no longer excite, biological mishaps take up the slack. Multiple orgasms? See you later. Multiple murder? I'll call you sometime. A man with multiple limbs sprouting from his chest? WHERE? *WHERE?!?* As far as grabbing one's attention goes, the norm is never as effective as the aberration. Maybe I'm not the typical American male, but I'd rather look at a two-headed ogress than at Cindy

Crawford. The generally accepted physical ideal is coldly intangible, almost a mathematical abstraction. Do we really want a world of flawless humans, as well-shapen and indistinguishable from one another as shampoo bottles in a drugstore? A perfectly formed body is about as useless as a carefree, happy life.

What dicks we Americans are. What turgid, toothless printed matter we crank out. On a purely literary level, the Mexicans whip our asses raw, *vato.* Already the world's preeminent publishers by dint of their gore mags, Mexico's pulp wizards have recently coughed up *deformity comics,* a concept as obvious but unexpected as a ring-tailed wolf-boy at a shopping mall.



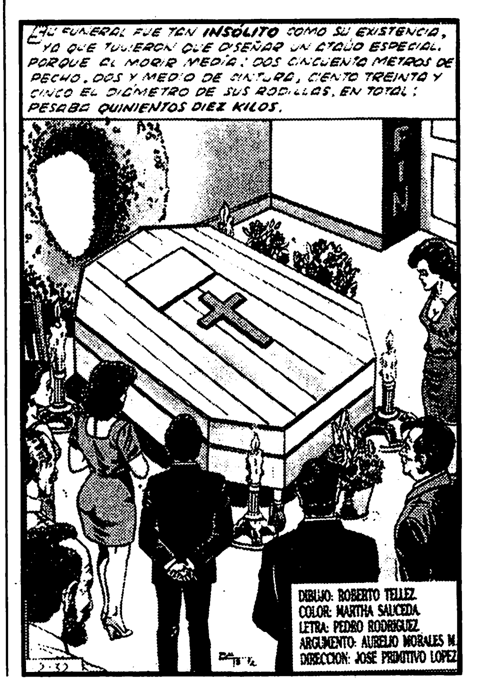


The series is called *Casos de Insolito (Unusual Cases),* and it's a full-color fiesta of chromosomal calamity. Each edition is dedicated to a single real-life case of human disfigurement. *ANSWER Me!* was lucky enough to get its paws on the first five issues, which follow the malformed odysseys of: a four-armed Hindu street person; a limbless would-be football player; a bedridden thousand-pound man; and two different sets of sexy Siamese sisters. In the game of hereditary Lotto, these are players who didn't get *any* of the six numbers right.

Casos stories are culled from tabloid items in its mother-ship publication, *Semanario de lo Insolito* (roughly, *Weirdness Weekly),* a glossy, south-of-the-border analogue to the *Weekly World News.* A nacho-flavored testament to the glories of frazzled DNA, *Semanario* keeps the public happy, be it with bread, circuses, or juicy horror tales such as *¡LE QUEMO SUS PARTES PRIVADOS CON ACIDO! (THEY BURNT HER PRIVATE PARTS WITH ACID!)* There are the typical pieces one might expect in this sort of rag, such as nudist church ceremonies, sidewalk levitationists, and the world's largest potato, but there's a strong focus on human freaks. The ugly, the bloated, and the hopelessly contorted adorn nearly every page.

In the comic-format *Casos,* instead of characters who can stop oncoming trains and leap tall buildings in a single bound, these superheroes have trouble getting out of bed. Instead of snickering arch-villains, they do battle with cruel genetic blows. Though impaled on the black humor of the ontological prong, they wriggle with all their energy to lead meaningful lives. Belittled and spat upon, they endure the slack-jawed stares and bullying taunts of rude normals. Earnest family members nudge them along in their wormlike struggle to achieve Positive Body Image. They forge ahead like most of us, although with admittedly higher tailor's bills and some added difficulty in finding dates.

The stories are drawn with Lichtensteinian rigidity and are presented without the knowing smirk of *norteamericano* art jockeys. The creators' intentions seem sincere, if a little bent. In keeping with the conservative tone, they trot out that tired literary workhorse known as The Indomitable Human Spirit. With the exception of The World's Fattest Man, who is shown sealed in a Buick-sized casket in the final frame, most of these tales have an uplifting, humanistic denouement. The narrative burrito is stuffed with pathos, and the effect is that of a Chaplin movie if the Little Tramp had been a thalidomide baby. Protagonists hobble off into the sunset, physically mangled but spiritually whole. We are ceaselessly reminded that while these folks may be genetic roadkill, their souls are no different than ours. The publishers cloyingly attempt to strum our heartstrings, to ram home the notion that these are people, too. No shit, but if they weren't limbless or joined at the hip, we wouldn't be interested in 'em! ■



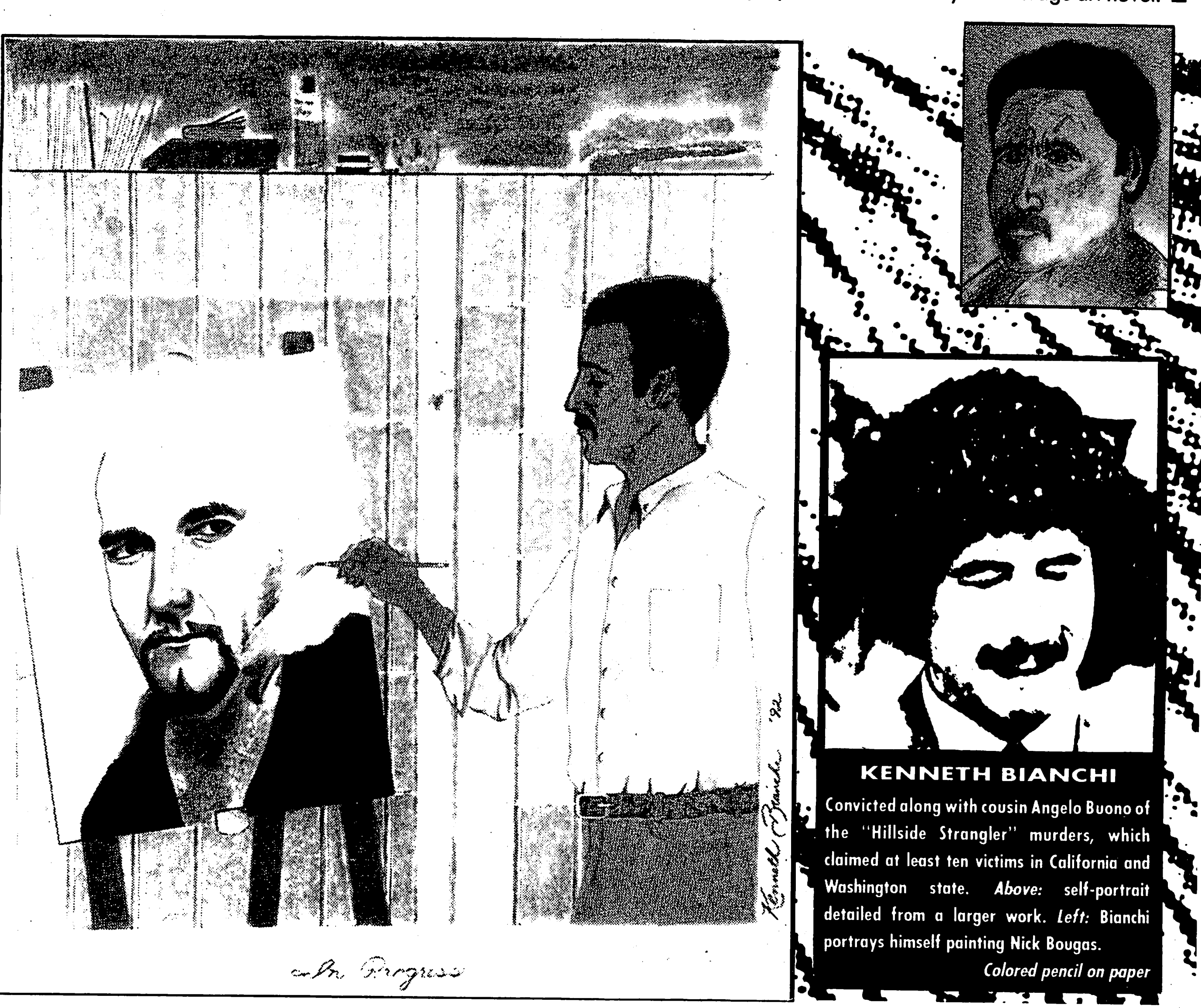
MY BLOODY PALETTE

8 TOP KILLERS FLEX THEIR ARTISTIC WEENIES

The stereotypical artist is a fey, pampered ideologue who spouts sweeping declamations against humanity while living an android's sheltered existence. The artist plumbs a discipline which aims to depict raw experience, yet few artists dare to pop the gleaming soap bubble which brightly encircles their germ-free lives. Since their works stink up the gallery like a colonic trumpet blast, it can be assumed that they clutch their paintbrushes with their assholes.

Not so when a **KILLER** picks up the brush. Whatever the technical merits of a finished piece are, it was drawn by the same hand which has taken lives. Consciously or not, a killer gives vent to the clotted backwaters of his harrowed cranium. He smears his psychic excrement on the canvas, squeezing his intestines drip-dry like a vinegar-soaked sponge.

All of the following works are from the private collection of the mighty Nick Bougas, director of the videos *Death Scenes I, II,* and *III.* These tormented dispatches certainly speak louder than the rabbit droppings displayed on the walls of your average art hovel. ■



KENNETH BIANCHI

Convicted along with cousin Angelo Buono of the "Hillside Strangler" murders, which claimed at least ten victims in California and Washington state. *Above:* self-portrait detailed from a larger work. *Left:* Bianchi portrays himself painting Nick Bougas.

Colored pencil on paper

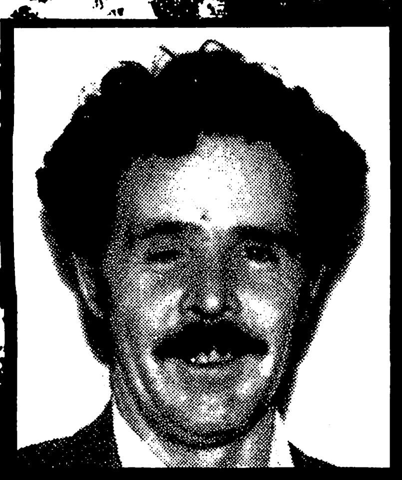


MARK DAVID CHAPMAN

Wayward Christian, slayer of John Lennon, and devoted student of *The Catcher in the Rye.* *Ink on paper*

GARY HEIDNIK

Proprietor of Philadelphia's "House of Horrors," where he kept female sex slaves chained in the basement, feeding them dog biscuits and prolonged doses of torture. Murdered at least two women, preserving the hacked-up body parts of one victim in a freezer. Wildly successful stock speculator. Self-appointed Christian minister. *Ink on paper*



HENRY LEE LUCAS

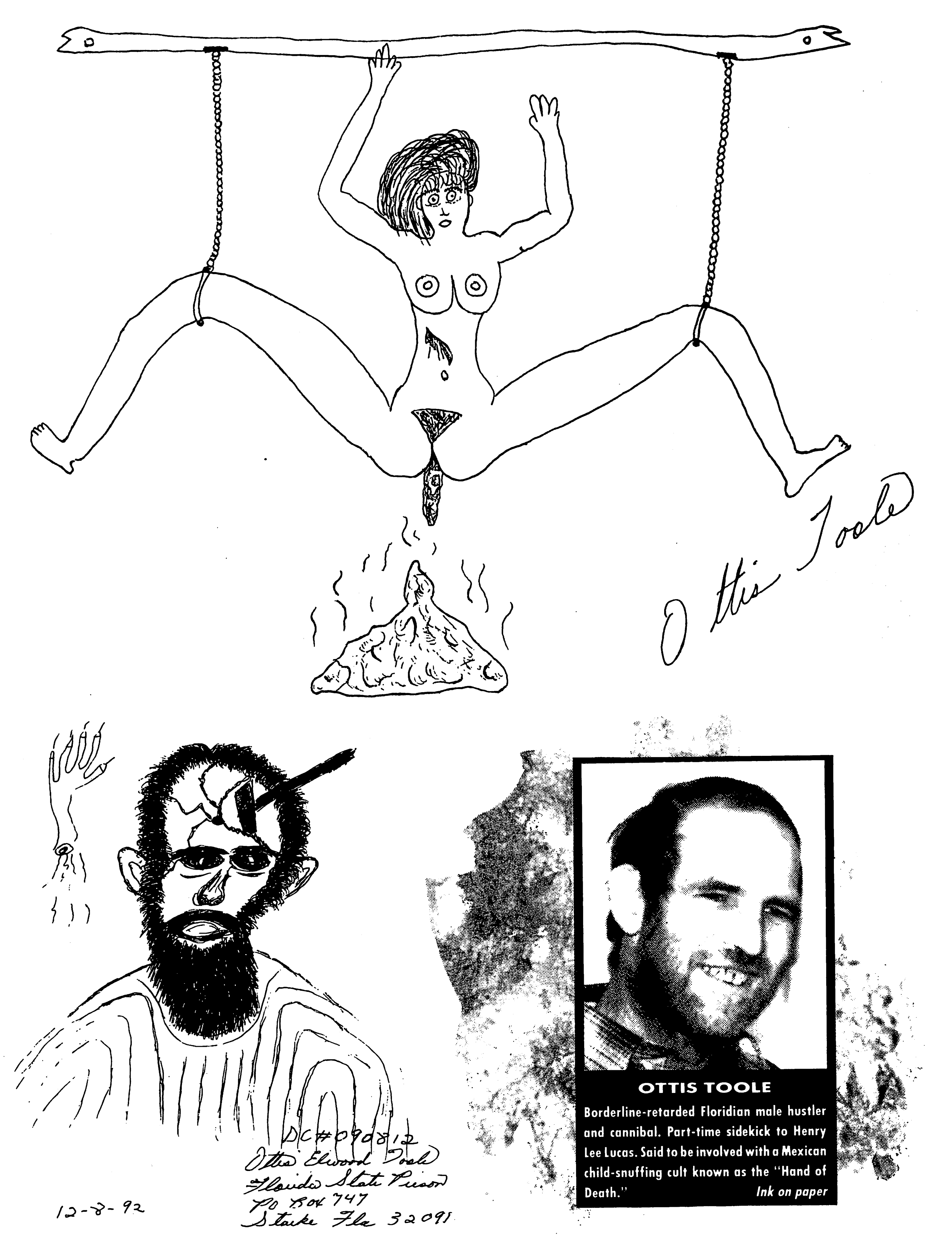
Found guilty of slaying eleven victims throughout the Southern and Western states. Once boasted of having killed as many as six hundred people. Strangled and stabbed his prostitute mother to death, raping her after she expired. Has reportedly become a born-again Christian.

Pencil on paper



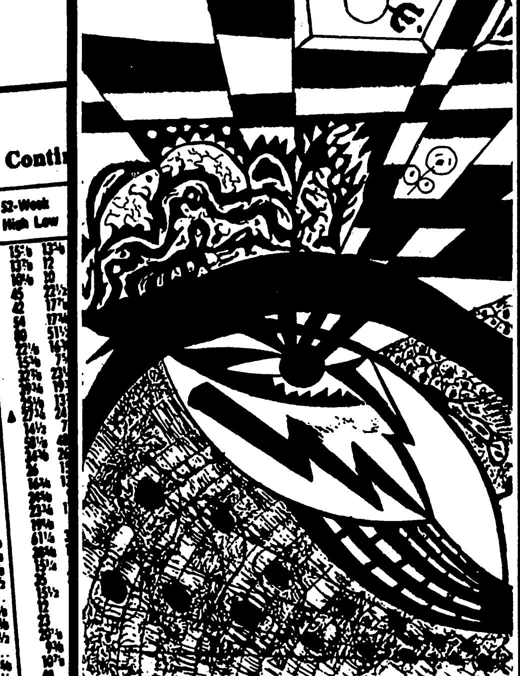


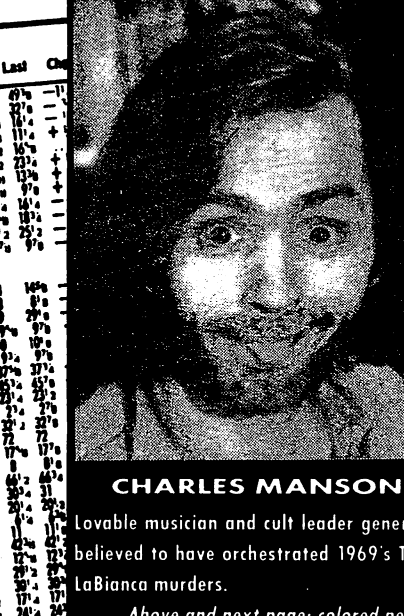




OTTIS TOOLE

Borderline-retarded Floridian male hustler and cannibal. Part-time sidekick to Henry Lee Lucas. Said to be involved with a Mexican child-snuffing cult known as the "Hand of Death." *Ink on paper*



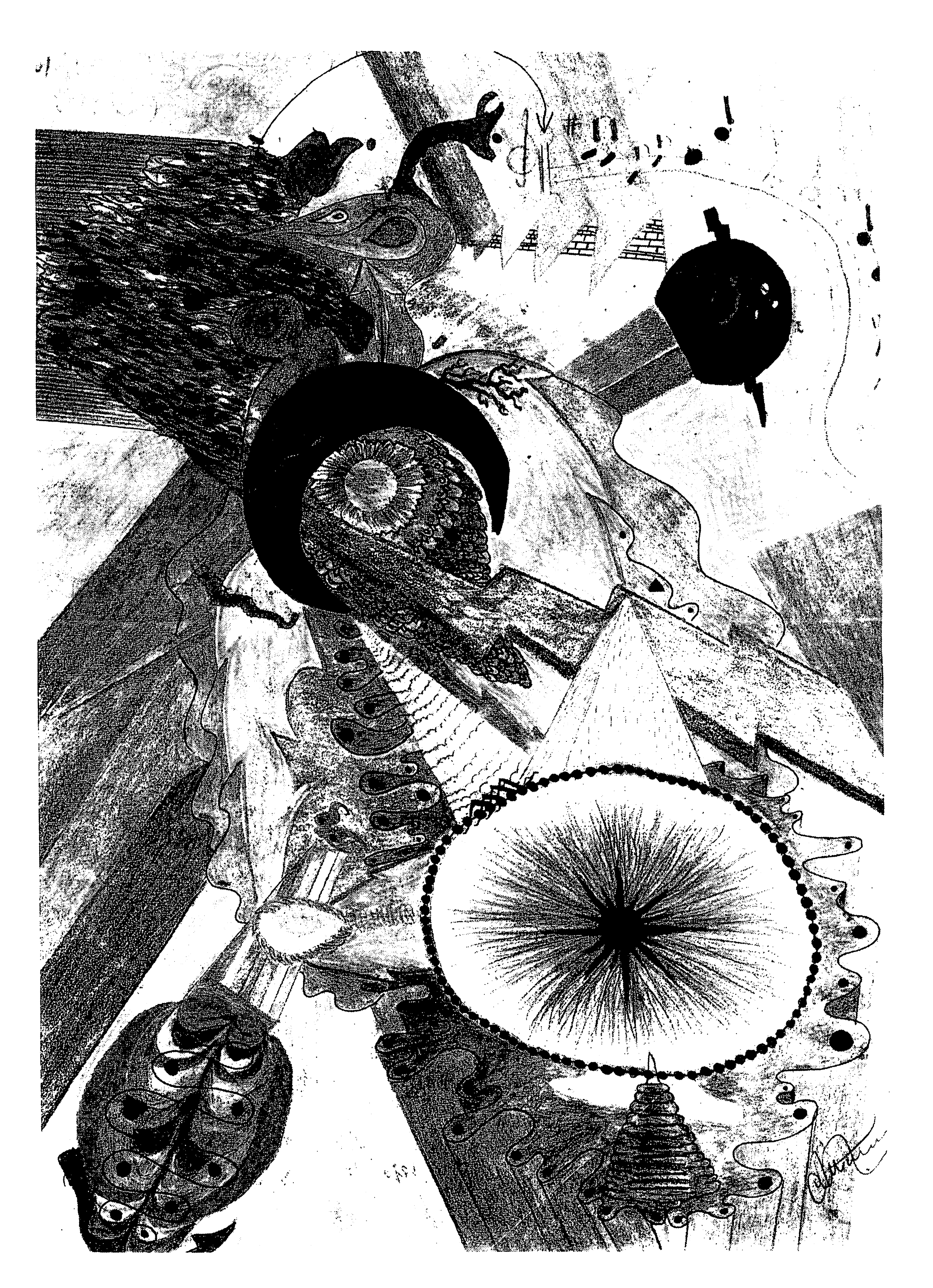


CHARLES MANSON

Lovable musician and cult leader generally believed to have orchestrated 1969's Tate-LaBianca murders.

Above and next page: colored pencils on paper

Left: black ink on paper

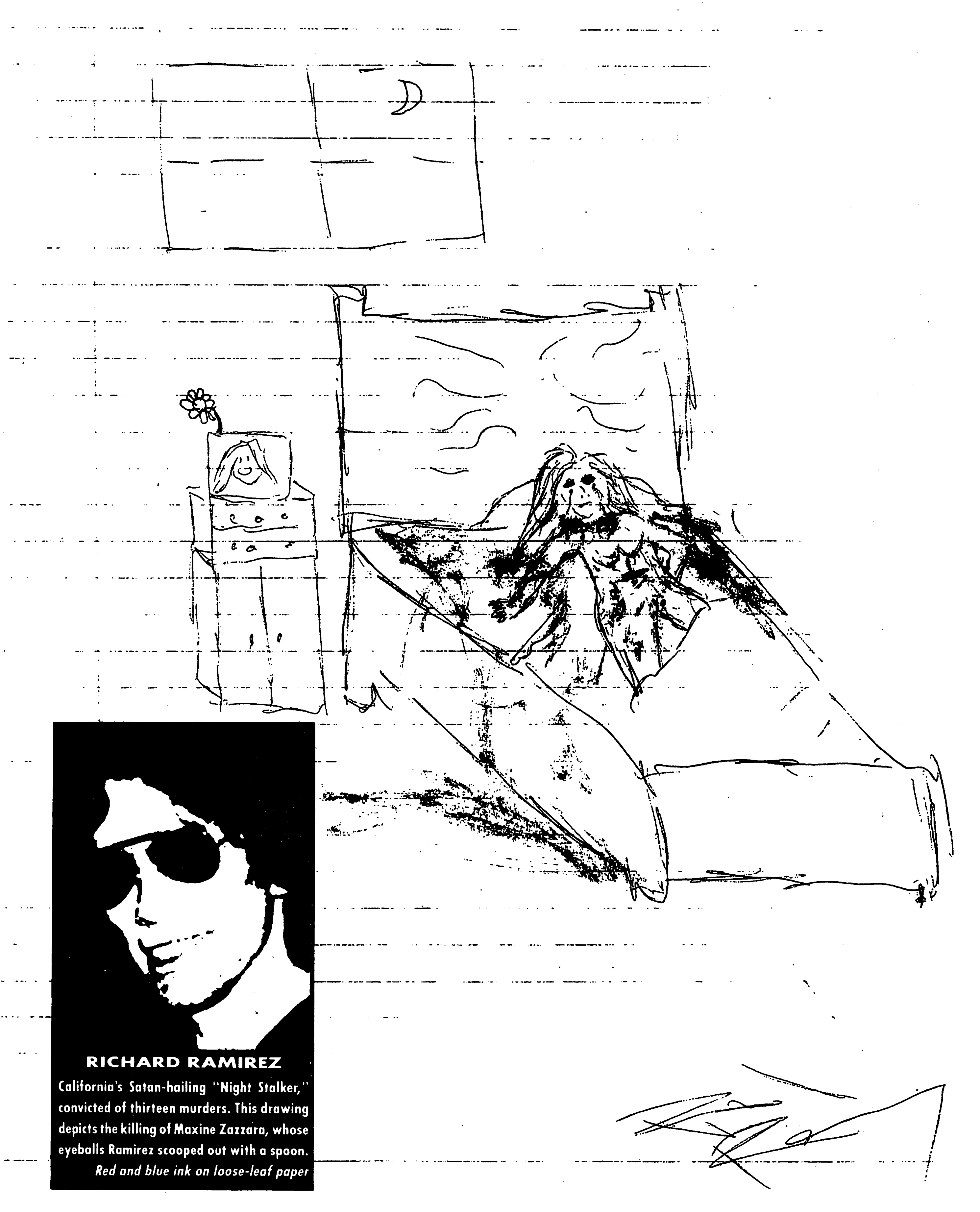




JOHN WAYNE GACY

Killed thirty-three boys and young men, burying most of them in and around his suburban Chicago home. Sometimes dressed in a clown outfit, posing as "Pogo" for the delight of local children.

Oil paintings on canvas



RICHARD RAMIREZ

California's Satan-hailing "Night Stalker," convicted of thirteen murders. This drawing depicts the killing of Maxine Zazzara, whose eyeballs Ramirez scooped out with a spoon.

Red and blue ink on loose-leaf paper

ANSWERLESS

IF YOU NEED A REASON TO LIVE, DON'T CALL THE SUICIDE HOTLINE



Hurt? Angry? Confused? Alone? Afraid? Depressed? Blue? Don't know where to turn? Unable to cope? Feeling stretched and ready to snap, sort of like a piece of saltwater taffy in a boardwalk window?

Well, don't look to us. We don't care about your problems. We wipe our asses with your problems. We *thrive* on your problems. You'll get no sympathy from us, and certainly no advice.

In an odd way, we're like psychiatrists. You can regurgitate your most hideous psychic pottage two feet beneath our snouts, and all we'll do is ask in a tinny voice for you to elaborate. You can bare your darkest secrets in their nudest agony, and we'll respond with all the tender emotion of a jail warden doing a rectal search. There's one crucial difference between us and psychiatrists, though—we *admit* that we're not helping you.

Several rungs below your typical doctorate-bearing shrink sits the telephone counselor, plying his or her rudimentary community-college training toward skimpy hourly wages and rapid emotional burnout. Perhaps the quickest burn comes from suicide counseling, a job whose only reward is knowing that you've prolonged some chronic loser's misery.

Firm believers in fair play, we chose to give a little of that misery back. Posing as "Jenny," a verbally abusive suicidal clerk in a Long Beach bubble-gum factory, Debbie called a series of suicide hotlines nationwide. There were sweet moments in nearly every call—a particularly cherished bit of repartee was when a Jamaican counselor from New York responded positively when "Jenny" offered to suck his cock. He teasingly claimed that his wife "doesn't have to know about it." But it was a call "Jenny" placed to a calmly robotic female phone jockey in Florida which seemed to encapsulate all that we detest about shrinkdom. Debbie tossed question after soul-searching question to this slave of psychotherapeutic lingo, only to have each question thrown back into her odorless lap.

This is the crisis line. May I help you?
Is this the suicide hotline?

Yes, it is. May I help you?
Well, I was wondering if you people could give me recommendations on what might be the best method.

I'm sorry—the best method for what?
To kill myself.

What's happening?
Well, what's a good way to do it? What do you recommend?

I personally don't think there is a good way, but what's happening?
Well, isn't this the suicide hotline? It's not the *anti*-suicide hotline, so you would know. Have you ever tried to kill yourself?

No, I haven't.
What would you think is the least painful way?

That's something that I don't really know. Is there something that I can help you with?
Well, what's a good way for me to kill myself? *That's* what you could help me with. This isn't the Padlock Society, is it?

What kind of problems are you having?
Are you my friend? I mean, what do you mean by that?

I just thought if there was something you wanted to talk about, if you're having some problems that you're trying to sort out, you might want to talk about it.
Well, what's the point of going on? I mean, can you give me three reasons why not to do it? Life sucks. It's plain and simple. I guess you can't give me three reasons, because I hear a pause on your part.

Well, what's happening that makes you feel that way?
Nothing is happening. That's the point. Nothing's happening. My life sucks, and I want to know, if this is the suicide hotline, if you people can give me recommendations on what might be a nice, clean, painless method.

And that we can't do.
Can you make my life better? I mean, what are you gonna do? Are you gonna be my friend?

What's wrong with your life?
Everything. It sucks! What's so great? I don't hear you—I mean, you're not giving me an answer, so I guess it's—I have a loaded gun here, you know. I have a gun in my apartment, and, I mean, if you can't give me three reasons why not to kill myself, it's goodbye, world.

That sounds like you've spent some time thinking about it.
I'm thirty-nine years old. I've spent since I was twelve years old thinking about this. Is that enough time?

How much family do you have?
I don't have any family. I live alone. I have nobody. I have not one friend. Next question. What's your next question?

Well, I'm not here to question you. It's not a matter of me trying to argue with your feelings in life, it's just that—
—You don't care what happens to me, do you? To you, it's just a job. [Pause] Well, you're not denying it.

Well, as a matter of fact, it's not just a job.
Well, help me out. Like, what do you suggest? You can't give me three reasons why I should keep going on. You can't give me a way that it would be painless. I have nothing to offer the world. The world has nothing to offer me. What do you suggest?

What have you been doing for thirty-nine years?
I work in a factory. I'm a secretary in a bubble-gum factory in Long Beach, California. I live completely alone. My husband died. Wherever I go, people give me a look like I smell or something. Everywhere I go, people give me a look like there's something wrong with me, like I look unusual. They always give me that LOOK. You know, I can tell you don't like me, either. This is just a job for you.

[Pause] I don't know what I can say to change your mind about the way you feel.
I guess that you don't have a high success rate, because you don't seem to be able to say anything. You're like everybody else. [Long pause] SAY SOMETHING! Tell me something! There's no reason to go on living?

Actually, I'm here for you to vent your feelings, and that's exactly what you're doing.
Well, people call you and they don't kill themselves afterwards? [Pause] I guess you don't have a very high success rate, because you don't seem to be very good at counseling. [Makes crying sounds] You're not giving me any reason why I should go on.

There are reasons, probably, deep down deep [sic].
Like what? [More crying sounds] Everybody hates me! My life is a failure. [Screaming] WHY SHOULD I GO ON? WHAT IS THERE TO LIVE FOR, HUH? TELL ME! WHAT IS THERE TO LIVE FOR?

[Calmly] What has made you happy in the past?
[Yet more crying sounds] Nothing! Nothing has made me happy!

You haven't had any moments of satisfaction?
I've been miserable for the last—since I was twelve years old, I've been miserable. Well, are you gonna help me? What is your advice? What is your advice? What is this place that I've called?

You said you were married.
And my husband is dead!

Didn't you have happiness while you were married?
He never paid attention to me. [Sighs] He's gone. He's in the box. What does it matter? I have not one friend. I live alone. I work in a goddamned bubble-gum factory in Long Beach, California. What kind of life do I have?

Where are you now?
I'm in Long Beach, California. [Long pause] I hear a lot of silence on your part.

Well, I'm just amazed that—
—What are you amazed about?

That you could be so unhappy and not be able to think of things that have made you happy in the past.
This is called the [BLANKETY-BLANK] Suicide and Crisis Hotline, correct? People call you and they say they're *happy?*

No, but they do normally want somebody to listen to them.
Well, I don't need someone to listen to me, lady. I need some answers. You know, maybe a lot of people like to talk just to hear themselves talk, but I think I need some serious answers here. I can talk to the four walls in my apartment. I need answers! [Pause] I guess you just don't know what it's like to really feel real, real, true pain. You just make, what, how much do you make an hour? Seventeen bucks?

I think you have totally the wrong idea about what the crisis line is for, and I'm not here to change your mind about that, but I am here to listen to you, if you want to talk about your feelings.
My feelings are that my life is HELL! Absolute HELL! When I wake up, I wish I was dead! I walk around, I'm a living dead person. And I want some advice. A recommendation for a painless, nice way to kill myself. I'm afraid the gun might be a little too messy, and who's gonna clean it up? They may not find my body for months, or maybe until the rent is due. So what do you recommend?

I just got through telling you that I can't recommend a way for you to do something that I don't believe in.
Well, what do you believe in?

I don't think that suicide is the answer to solving problems.
What is the answer? What is your name? If you want to be my friend, I'd like to know your first name.

My name is Wanda. What's your name?
Jenny.

Jenny.
Yeah. Uh, Wanda, what is the answer?

In some people's cases, the answer is looking to help other people who are less fortunate. That's not the answer for everyone. But for some people, that's the answer.
How am I gonna help? Wherever I go, people give me that look. They look at me like I'm poison!

[Pause] Ever since you were twelve?
Yes. Ever since I was twelve.

What happened when you were twelve?
I just came to the realization one day that, you know, that life seemed to have nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing to offer me.

[Pause] And you fell in love and got married and nothing changed?
Well, my husband, we were married a very short, brief time, and my husband died. He had a heart attack. He was much older than me.

No thought of ever getting married again someday?
How can I get married? People don't even TALK to me! I work in a factory. I go to work, I do my job. Nobody talks to me. I get on the bus. I do not communicate with anybody ALL DAY! Nobody talks to me, and I don't talk to anybody. Is that a life? I'm thirty-nine—what have I got to go on for? What is there to look forward to tomorrow?

You must have things outside the factory that you have thought about doing.
I have no interests whatsoever. I just sit in front of the television all night long, drinking hot chocolate.

Do you read?
I once in a while read the *National Enquirer*, the *Weekly World News*, the *Globe*, uh, the *TV Guide*. That's about it. Once in a while, the newspaper.

Have you ever thought about writing?
Uh, I wrote a little bit, and it was very, very depressing. It was just about how much I don't understand why people give me that look. And I couldn't really come to any conclusions whatsoever. So, I mean, you know, it was just garbage.

Have you tried going to a counselor?
I went to a counselor, and all they do is sit there, and they don't give me advice. They just sit there, and they want me to talk about my feelings, and I need some answers. After a while, I run out of stuff to talk about. I mean, you know, I can go and pay money and the same thing is discussed. I feel miserable. My life stinks! And no one seems to have any answers. They just keep looking at me like I'm poison! Like I'm an alien from another planet!

Have you tried volunteering someplace where people really need you?
I tried, but the people always seemed to give me that look again, like I'm so different from them. They just hate me! As soon as they meet me, they hate me! And I hate myself, and I don't want to live anymore, and as [far as this] being the suicide hotline, I thought that you could give me some nice recommendations of easy ways to kill myself. Isn't that what this phone service is all about?

No. And I think you know that, that we don't tell people how to kill themselves.
Well, it's called the suicide hotline, so I just assumed that that's what its purpose is.

And where did you get the number from?
I got the phone number in some newspaper. I wouldn't call anywhere locally, because you know how it is in California. Nobody cares, and I figured in a small town, like where you're in—[DELETED]—I don't even know where [DELETED] is in Florida. Maybe you're near Miami. Is that where you are?

No, it's closer to the Cape.
Oh. Cape Cod?

No, it's closer to Cape Kennedy. Cape Canaveral.
Oh. And I figured in a small town like that, maybe people would be more caring, more kind, more gentle. I mean, what's so great about life? I can't find any redeeming values.

I think what's great about life is what you're able to do with it.



Well, I haven't been able to do anything. I consider myself a failure to be thirty-nine years old and still be working in a factory. I have not one friend. And every night I sit in front of the TV set. I don't think I'm doing much with my life. What's the point?

Well, it sounds like the point is trying something that does make you feel better.
Nothing makes me feel better. Nothing. I'm never happy. [Pause] What do you look like, Wanda?

Uh, I don't really know. I haven't—uh, I haven't dwelled on, uh, what I look like, because people don't normally see me.
Well, don't you look in the mirror? You must know what you *look* like. How old are you?

But this call isn't about me. This call's about you.
Well, I'm talking to you. You know, we're on the phone quite a while. I'm curious how old you are and what you look like. You know all this information about me.

But that's because you called and wanted to talk.
Well, I'm curious, you know. I'm probably not going to be around much longer. I really feel miserable. It would make me feel better to know what you look like and how old you are.

That's not something that I want to reveal.
I guess you don't want to make me feel better. Because, I mean, we're never gonna meet. Why can't you confide in me your age?

That's not something that's important in your life. What's important in your life is what you do with your life, not what I do with mine.
Well, it's important for me to know right now what you look like and how old you are.

How could that possibly make a difference?
Because we're on the phone. I'm curious to know what you look like. And, by the way, my husband had that heart attack during sex, in case you were wondering about that. [Pause] How old are you, Wanda?

I was more concerned about you.
Well, I just confided a very personal detail to you, that my husband had the heart attack during sex. If I could confide such a PERSONAL, PERSONAL detail to you, I'd like you to tell me your age.

And that I'm not ready to tell you.
So you don't care. You're just like all the rest.

It's not a matter of caring.
This is just a job for you. You can't give me the simple consideration of being one human being to another.





You know, I have not one friend in the world. If you were my friend, you would tell me how old you are and what you look like.

I'm not saying I'm your friend. I'm saying that I'm here if you want to discuss things that you could possibly do with your life that wouldn't make you feel so miserable.
But there's nothing. There's nothing, Wanda. I can't think of anything, and obviously you can't, either.

You're not a very open person.
I've confided so much stuff to you, you know. I don't know you, either, and yet I'm confiding all this personal stuff, and you're telling me I'm not an open person? I think that's very wrong.

You're not being open about what has made you feel so miserable. What happened when you were twelve?
Nothing special. I just one day woke up and realized that life sucked and people sucked, and I realized that I felt very different from everybody and I would never get accepted. I would never be in life's little clique. I would always be the outcast.

Do you have brothers and sisters?
I have an older brother, but we were never very close. We have nothing in common. We're very different.

What were your parents like?
Well, my mother is dead, and my father I haven't spoken to in a couple of years. We don't get along. He's remarried, and he's a real imbecile. I was never really into the family trip, and they were pretty overprotective while I was growing up.

Being that they cared.
I don't know if you—I think it's beyond caring. It was more like a sickness of prying through my pocketbook, going through my night-table stuff, reading personal letters, following me, listening in on phone calls. I think that's beyond caring. I would say that's more, even beyond overprotectiveness, wouldn't you, Wanda?

[Pause] It sounds a little strong, yes.
Yeah. So I'm not into the family at this stage of the game.

But have you been in counseling? You talked to other people about this?
Yeah. I went to about seven different—no, *seventeen* different counselors, and—no, no—seven. Seven or seventeen, I don't remember. And no, it wasn't an enjoyable experience, because, like you, they just wanted to listen, and I need some answers, and I mean, these people go to school, they get their M.S.W.s, their Ph.D.s, and with all this college education and this schooling in psychology, how come they can't give me some answers? How come they can only listen? I mean, I can listen and I'd be making a lot more money than I am working in the factory job, believe me. I should be a psychiatrist, because I'm a very good listener, as well.

What schooling have you had?
Oh, I'm a college graduate myself. And isn't it sad that all I could get because of the economy is just a job in a factory? In a *bubble-gum* factory? I was always in secretarial positions or office type, clerical type of work as well. I'm not a people person, so I probably don't have the, uh, I can't schmooze my way in the business world, I guess.

What do you do for recreation?
Well, once in a while in the past I went bowling, I went to drive-in movies, skeet shooting. Most of the time I just watch television or just stare into space and I try to figure things out, analyze everything, and I never could come up with any conclusions or answers myself.

Were you good at bowling?
No. I wasn't ever good in any sports. I wasn't good in ANYTHING. I never excelled in ANYTHING, Wanda.

How 'bout art?
No. Terrible. [Pause] So can you give me three reasons why not to do it after listening to my sorry tale?

Well, I think that things could be better for ya.
How's that?

Well, you're not a dumb person. Uh, there are ways of finding out, uh, your worth in life, and as I said before, volunteering is one of them. Uh, reading to people who are blind, for instance.
Well, they can't give me that LOOK, I guess, 'cause they're blind. They wouldn't be able to see my ugly face.

What is ugly about your face?
I don't know, but people always look at me like I'm ugly, so I must be ugly.

Could it be the way you look at other people?
I don't know. I really don't know, Wanda. I don't like them, and they don't like me, it looks like. But you know what? Maybe I should just order a nice pizza for now. Maybe that would help. Maybe if I got a nice, hot pizza. You know, I don't like it when it's cold, when the cheese sticks to the cardboard. Maybe that's what I should do. I live in Long Beach. Do you know a good place around here that delivers a nice, hot pizza?

No. I was only in Long Beach once.
I guess you don't care, Wanda. You don't even know a pizzeria.

I'm sure you're far more experienced with that.
I really wish you had given me your age and what you look like. I really feel like you're just like all the rest. You want me to divulge all my personal life story to you, but you can't give me some information about you. And that's not fair. It should be a two-way street, Wanda.

[Pause] You called me, and it's your privilege to talk about yourself.
Well, for you it's just a job, because if it was more than that, you would have told me your age and what you look like. You would have been my friend.

You can't develop a friendship over the phone.
A lot of people do. Well, I've read in the newspaper that some people develop friendships over the phone. How else will I make a friend? Maybe we can be phone pals or something. Because I don't have any friends here. You won't even tell me your age, what you look like. What religion are you?

How would you know whether I was telling you the truth or not?
Well, I would hope so. That's another reason why I'm depressed. Because you would LIE to me, Wanda?

No. But by being honest with you, I'm telling you that's not something that I give out. This is not a line for me to get personal about myself on.
Well, I think it would help if you did.

I'm afraid I have to disagree with you on that.
Do you sign something when you take the job that you're not supposed to divulge what you look like and what your age is to phone callers?

No, but we do, we are trained. We do understand that this is not a place for us to vent our feelings.
You know, I know someone who works on a hotline, and he met his girlfriend through the phone. Obviously, he was divulging something to her, because now they're shacked up together. And you won't even tell me your age.

Is that something that you've tried volunteering for?
I tried, but they don't seem to have any openings. And wherever I go, people just shun me.

How long have you worked at the factory?
I've been working there five years, and I can't get a promotion, because I'm not a people person. So I'm very good at what I do, and the boss knows it. I'm the most efficient worker on the factory line, and every week the boss tells me how wonderful a job I'm doing, but because they realize that I'm not a people person and I don't know how to schmooze, they keep me on the factory line as opposed to the administrative type of jobs. Because the people don't like to work around me.

But you're dependable.
I'm there every day. I was dependable. I went in, I felt miserable. Like a walking dead person. So I've divulged all this personal information to you, Wanda. Does it sound like a *happy* life?

No, and I think I've mentioned that it sounds like it could get better, that you have possibilities.
What is [sic] the possibilities?

Getting out and doing things for other people.
But I don't get along with people.

Have you tried working with children?
I HATE children. I want to KILL children. I HATE babies. Ugh! There's nothing I hate worse than a baby.

What has your experience been with children?
I just don't like when they scream. They make too much noise. They're ugly. I hate infants. There's nothing to me more DISGUSTING than a newborn baby. If I worked with a child, I would have to kill it. I absolutely HATE children, Wanda. That's the worst idea you could recommend. Next.

[Pause] What have you done in the past that you've had some success with?
Am I the most interesting person who's ever called you?

The most interesting?
Yes. Are you enjoying talking to me? [Pause] Do you like me, Wanda?

I can't honestly say that, no, but I don't know you.
You said you don't like me.

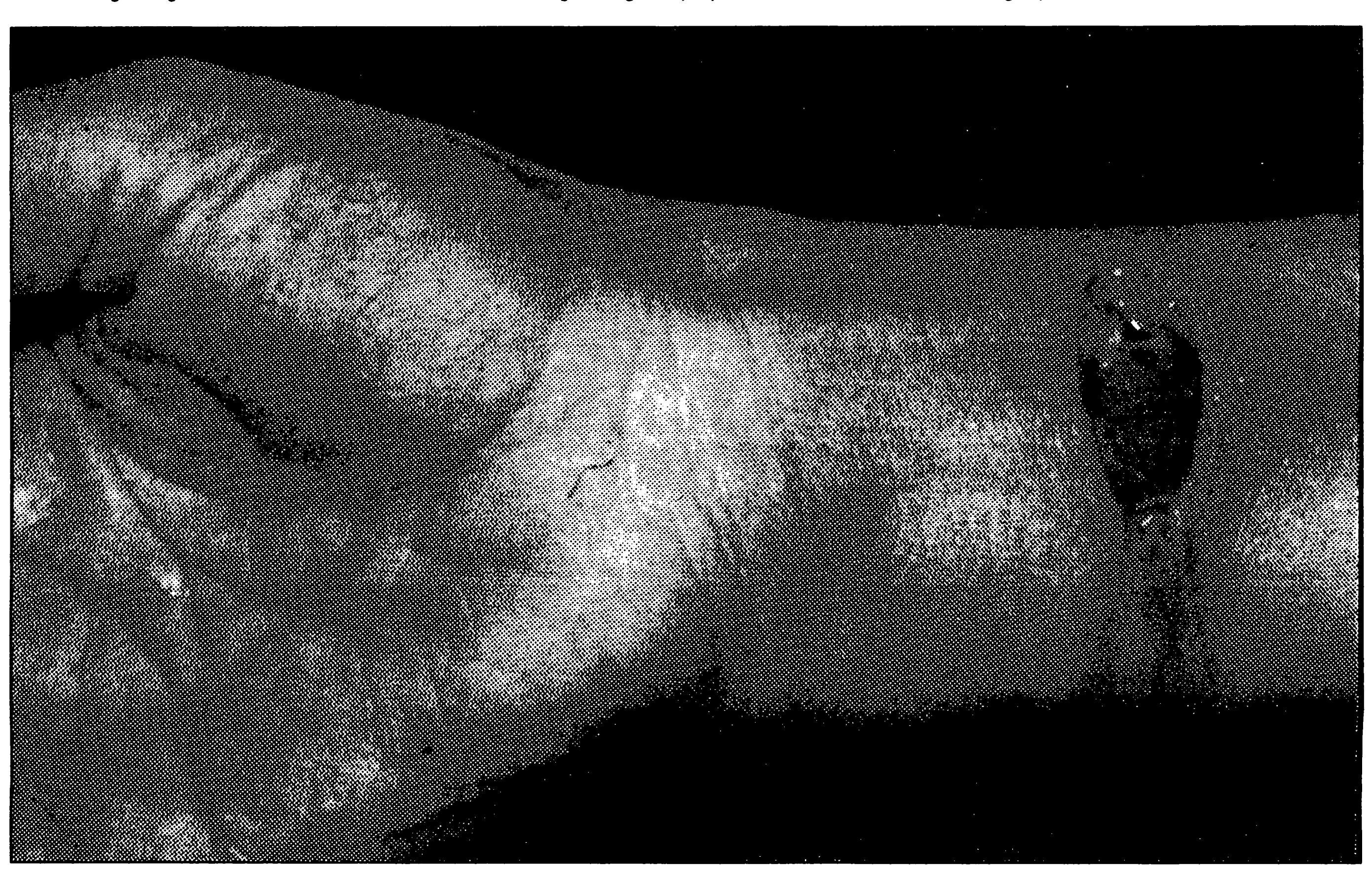
I didn't say that.
What time is it there?

About seven minutes after two [a.m.].
Oh, so you're a night person, huh?

[Unintelligible] Do you like animals?
Animals are pure. Their souls are pure, not like people.

Have you thought about volunteering in an animal shelter?
I tried that, but when I went in, the people treated me like I'm nuts again. Like I'm an alien. They gave me that look.

That's hard to believe.
They ignored me and gave me that look. [Pause] I guess I'll just go order a pizza, 'cause you can't help me. [Hangs up] ■




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